

plains clubtail

Gomphurus externus

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Insecta
Order: Odonata
Family: Gomphidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The plains clubtail is a heavy-weight coming at a length of two to two-and-one-half inches. It has large, blue eyes on a green face; a black and yellow-green thorax; long black legs; and clear wings with black veins and a yellow margin along the front wing. Their abdomen has arrow-shaped black markings along the sides and ends with a yellow and black club. They are essentially identical to the pronghorn clubtail (*Gomphus graslinellus*), which also occurs statewide. The plains clubtail has hind legs are a little shorter but is more accurately identified in hand by looking at their reproductive structures.

BEHAVIORS

This dragonfly is found near sandy, muddy rivers and streams with moderate current, near open grass or wooded banks. They can be seen statewide from May to September. Males occasionally fly long distances over a river and perch on flat leaves when not in flight. Mating happens in low vegetation near water. Females deposit their eggs by cruising right above the water and tapping their abdomen into the water. They will mate more than once over their short life span, laying up to 5,000 eggs in total. Nymphs are shallow burrowers and prefer fine sediments with lots of organic material (decaying leaves, etc.)

ILLINOIS RANGE



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female



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male



Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none