

red saddlebags

Tramea onusta

FEATURES

The red saddlebag is medium to large (1.5 to 2 inches long) dragonfly. The large brown spots on the wings near the body give this species its namesake. Males have large, burgundy eyes; a hairy, brown thorax; long, black legs; and a bright red abdomen with a black spot at the end. Females have brown eyes; a brown, hairy thorax; and a brown abdomen. They are easily confused for Carolina saddlebags (*Tramea carolina*), which occur in the eastern and southern part of the state but have a purple instead of red face.

BEHAVIORS

This species is found near ponds and shallow lakes with lots of vegetation statewide, from May to August. They feed in open areas between dawn and dusk, sometimes targeting swarms of other insects near streams. Adults mate in vegetation or woody debris for eight to ten minutes. Females have been seen depositing eggs on shiny, water-like surfaces; like wet roads, silage tarp, and automobiles. Larvae eats larval amphibians.

TAXONOMY

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





female

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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; temporary water supplies

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none