

saffron-winged meadowhawk

Sympetrum costiferum

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The saffron-winged meadowhawk is about one and one-half inches long and has bright margins on their front wings. Males are dark red all over, with light to dark brown legs. Winged, adult females are bright yellow when they molt, and become light brown with time. Females have tan eyes with dull red caps, a tan face, and the front margins of their wings are yellow. There are several look alike species. The autumn meadowhawk (*Sympetrum vicinum*) doesn't have a margin on the front wing; and the cherry faced- (*Sympetrum internum*), ruby- (*Sympetrum rubicundulum*), and white faced- (*Sympetrum obtrusum*) meadowhawk all have black legs and all occur statewide.

BEHAVIORS

The saffron-winged meadowhawk occurs in the northern half of the state, near ponds, lakes, and permanent wetlands. Adults fly from late June to October. This species breeds in the open, unlike most in the genus *Sympetrum*, who breed in the forest or among aquatic plants. Males perch near shore, and hover amongst twigs and plants to look for a mate. The mating pair deposits eggs together in open water and wet shorelines, in a slow and very methodical manner.

ILLINOIS RANGE



female

© Mark Kluge



male

© Mark Kluge



Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none