

# slender spreadwing

## *Lestes rectangularis*

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

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### FEATURES

The slender spreadwing is one and one-half to two inches long and slender bodied. The body color changes with age, and it takes two weeks to develop. Young individuals have brown eyes, hairy legs, and a brown and black body that is cream colored underneath. Mature individuals have blue eyes, a bright, sky-blue, and black body. Females have slightly thicker abdomens. The slender spreadwing is very similar to several species (lyre-tipped—, amber-winged—, elegant—, and swamp spreadwings) and subtle differences in thoracic stripes differentiate them.

### BEHAVIORS

The slender spreadwing flies statewide from May to September, in shady, wooded, ponds and lakes. In Illinois, they fly distinctly earlier than other common *Lestes*. They are locally abundant. They mate three weeks after molting into adults and live for up to six weeks. Mate away from water. Females deposit eggs one at a time in cattails, without the male – which is uncommon in this genus.

### ILLINOIS RANGE



female

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male

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## **Aquatic Habitats**

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

## **Woodland Habitats**

none

## **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

none