

slender spreadwing

Lestes rectangularis

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.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Odonata

Family: Lestidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

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