

southern spreadwing

Lestes australis

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The southern spreadwing is one and one-half to almost two inches long and has large eyes. Males have bright blue eyes, a light blue and black body, and the thorax is light underneath. Females have brown eyes, and a brown and black thorax that is light underneath. The sweetflag and southern spreadwing can only be distinguished in hand and the sweetflag spreadwing has only been recorded in the eastern half of Illinois. The northern spreadwing (*Lestes disjunctus*) is very similar to the southern but males are more blue, and females have stouter abdomens. The northern spreadwing is only found around Lake Michigan.

BEHAVIORS

The southern spreadwing inhabits weedy ponds and lakes, flying statewide from May to August. Adults live for two to three months and may even overwinter as adults in the southern USA. Males can be found perching on shoreline vegetation for long periods of time. Mating takes six to 19 minutes and individuals average two mating's during their winged lifespan.

ILLINOIS RANGE



female

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male

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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none