

spatterdock darner

Rhionaeschna mutata

FEATURES

The spatterdock darner is a large dragonfly with huge eyes and striking color. This species is sexually dimorphic, meaning males and females look different. Males are mostly blue in color with black stripes on the thorax and black patterning on the abdomen. Females have a blue-green body with similar black patterns, mottled with brown on the abdomen; and a larger abdomen. It can be confused with mosaic darners (*Aeshna sp.*), but they don't fly until later in the summer season.

BEHAVIORS

The spatterdock darner is found along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers near wooded shorelines and is named for its association with water lilies. They are seen flying on sunny days from May to June. Males cruise slowly back and forth above water looking for a mate and aggressively defending their breeding territory. Competing males often chase one another far and high. Pairs mate in trees and female's deposits eggs in plants. Larvae live for three to four years in the water before hatching into adults.

TAXONOMY

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

rare, native

ILLINOIS RANGE



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Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none