

Autumn meadowhawk

Sympetrum vicinum

FEATURES

Autumn meadowhawks are dragonflies that likely earned their name for their appearance, the warm colors of autumn. Males are entirely red, have reddish-brown legs, and a black spot on the ninth abdominal segment. Older males might exhibit more black markings at the end of the abdomen. Females have red and tan eyes, with red or tan thorax, light brown or yellow legs, and some black (similar to males) on the eighth and ninth abdominal segments.

BEHAVIORS

Adults are often observed at forest edges or clearings near breeding sites. They perched on shrubs, tree trunks, or wood piles. On cool days, they can be observed sunning on the ground. Unlike some other species, males do not defend their territory by the water. Paired up, they arrive at the water by late morning or midday and congregate in or around dense vegetation. Before egg laying, they often fly out far and wide around the area. Mating lasts around six minutes. Egg laying occurs in tandem, facing and laying near the shoreline in shallow waters, wet mud, or vegetation, such as moss-covered logs. The autumn meadowhawk has quite a northern range, usually just after the last frost. They are able to maintain activity in colder areas by basking in the sun constantly. They are found near permanent lakes and ponds with a good amount of vegetation, often near forest and woodland areas. The range is throughout Illinois and continues north into Canada, and east to the coast. Eastern populations extend west to Nebraska, and south to eastern New Mexico. A few sporadic populations have been observed in northern California and southern British Columbia (Canada).

TAXONOMY

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

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