

slaty skimmer

Libellula incesta

FEATURES

The slaty skimmer is between one and one-quarter to two and one-quarter inches long. Males and females of this species look quite different, and females look different from young to old age. Males have large, red eyes and a blue body. Young females have a cream-colored body, brown thoracic markings near wings, and a black stripe down the top of the abdomen. Mature females look like males but are more dully colored and have a darker abdomen. The bar-winged skimmer (*Libellula axilena*) is similar – but is easily distinguished by its namesake – the dark lines on the wings, and only occurs in on the Ohio River in Illinois. Female slaty and great blue skimmer (*Libellula vibrans*) are very similar and much of their range overlaps.

BEHAVIORS

The slaty skimmer flies near lakes, ponds, streams, and woody areas, from May to September in the southern half of Illinois. Males search for mates by perching near shore and defending a small territory. Mating takes 30 to 60 seconds while flying or perched. Males guard females while they deposit their eggs into aquatic plants. There are a locally abundant and notorious for hunting other freshly molted dragonflies.

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; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none