

swamp spreadwing

Lestes vigilax

FEATURES

The swamp spreadwing is a medium-sized, metallic damselfly with relatively large eyes on a small head. It is one-and-a-half to two inches long and when perched, the four wings are spread widely and held tailward. The thorax and abdomen are metallic green to bronze in color on top and yellow below, becoming pruinose (dusty/powdery) with age. Male's eyes are bright blue on top and yellow green below and female's eyes are brown on top and yellow below. Females are duller in color than males. The swamp spreadwing is very similar to the elegant spreadwing (*Lestes inaequalis*) and close inspection of the male's claspers (terminal appendages) and female's ovipositor is needed to differentiate them. The elegant spreadwing is only found in the northern fourth of the state and the very southern tip, while the swamp spreadwing is found statewide. Differences in wing venation (veins in the wings) separate this genus from *Argia*.

BEHAVIORS

The swamp spreadwing can be found statewide in sheltered, shallow lakes and wetlands with lots of aquatic vegetation. They can be seen flying from May to October. The swamp spreadwing is a slow flyer and can be very difficult for the collector to find, as it spends much time perched in dense, shoreline grasses and shrubs. Pairs deposit eggs together in aquatic vegetation.

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; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps; temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge