

twelve-spotted skimmer

Libellula pulchella

FEATURES

The twelve spotted skimmer is a large dragonfly with three black spots on each wing. Males and females both have large brown eyes on a brown face, and a brown thorax with two pale stripes on each side. Males have a dusty grey abdomen, and females have a brown abdomen with two yellow stripes along the back. The common whitetail (*Plathemis lydia*) is like the female twelve spotted skimmer but yellow stripes along the abdomen are framed in black.

BEHAVIORS

The twelve spotted skimmer is found abundantly statewide, flying from May to September. This species covers large territories daily and can be found in open fields and prairies near or far from lakes and ponds with emergent vegetation. Males defend small territories near the water shore in search for a mate and are quite aggressive towards all other male dragonflies. They can otherwise be seen perched on twigs and shrubs. Mating is brief and takes place in flight. Females deposit eggs in aquatic vegetation.

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; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge