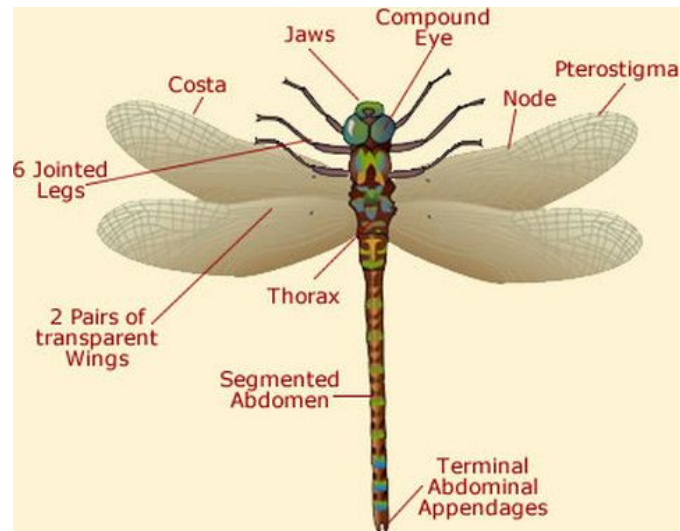
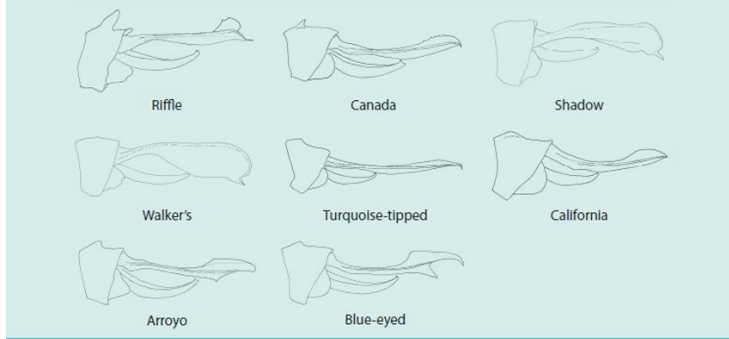


Odonata Field Guide
By Jewel Palanca and Marissa Salamat



Aeshnidae

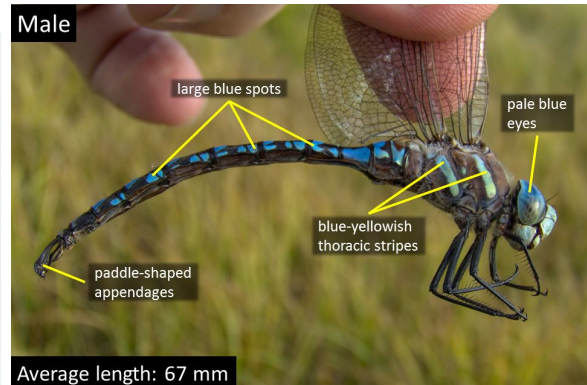
Riffle, Mosaic, and Neotropical Darners - male appendages



For most darners:

Flight Pattern: Usually small darner flies around during early spring, while larger darners fly during late summer and flies higher and farther out over water.

Aeshna palmata (Paddle-tailed Darner)



(Glenn Giroir (left) and <http://azdragonfly.org/species/paddle-tailed-darner> (right))

Description: Large dragonfly; abdomen patterned black, blue, and brown; thorax brown with no stripes on top; dusky blue eyes.

Male: Eyes slightly towards the turquoise side of bright blue. Thoracic stripes blue to greenish-yellow. Blue spots on abdomen large. Paddle appendages.

Female: Polymorphic, heteromorph with brown eyes and yellow stripes and spots, andromorph with blue eyes and much blue stripes and spots. Cerci (near terminal abdominal appendage) obtuse angled at tip, about as long as segment 9-10.

Habitat: Marshes, bogs, ponds, lakes, slow streams, even small ones, usually with dense shore vegetation. For the most part in forested landscapes, but some populations in open country. Colonizes small suburban ponds readily.

Aeshna umbrosa (Shadow Darner)



<http://www.dpr.ncparks.gov/odes/a/accounts.php?id=47>

Description: Large dragonfly; abdomen patterned black, blue, and brown; thorax brown with no stripes on top; dusky blue eye.

Male: Eyes turquoise. Lateral thoracic stripes blue-green above, yellow-green below. Paddle appendages.

Female: Polymorphic, heteromorph with brown eyes and yellow markings, andromorph with blue-tinged eyes, greenish to yellow thoracic stripes, and blue abdominal spots. Cerci rounded at tip, longer than segment 9-10, usually broken off at maturity.

Habitat: Wooded streams, ponds, bogs, lakes, even small ones, and slow streams. More common on streams than other mosaic darners in its range. Colonizes small suburban ponds readily.

Flight Season: In California Feb-Nov

Aeshna walkeri (Walker's Darner)



<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/67728-Aeshna-walkeri>

Description: Large dragonfly; abdomen pattern black, blue, and brown; thorax brown with no stripes on top; dusky blue eyes

Male: Eyes dull brownish-grey with blue tinge and pale blue posterior edges, face pale blue to white. Thoracic stripes pale blue above, whitish below, or entirely white. Paddle appendages.

Female: Eyes dark brown, paler below, with a hint of blue. Color pattern much as male, abdominal spots either blue or olive-green. Presumably polymorphic. Cerci narrow at base, expanded toward tip; often broken off.

Habitat: Rocky streams in arid foothill

Anax junius (Common Green Darner)



<https://birdfolkcollective.com/products/common-green-darner-dragonfly>

Description: Large dragonfly; green head and thorax; bright blue (males) or purple (females) abdomen. For immature ones there S3-10 will be a reddish violet and wings will be uncolored. When older the wings will become increasingly suffused with amber, especially on females wings.

Male: Eyes dull greenish, paler below. Face greenish, frons (the "forehead" part on the insect) blue above the "bull's eye" pattern. Thorax bright to dull grass-green. Abdomen with S1 green, S2-6 bright blue, S7-8 duller, often bluish-green, S9-10 mostly dark

Female: Polymorphic, most females with S1-2 green, S3-10 brown above and gray-green on sides.

Habitat: Any area with still water. More specifically lakes and all but smallest ponds and slow streams. But due to its migratory nature they can be seen anywhere at or away from water.

Flight Season: California: All Year

Note: Feed at any time of the day, even at dusk. Perching tends to be lower than other darners and in open areas, often in herbaceous vegetation.

Rhionaeschna californica (California Darner)



(<https://www.uglyhedgehog.com/t-591955-1.html>)

Description: Medium dragonfly; abdomen patterned black, blue, and brown; thorax brown with no stripes in front; dusky blue-brown eyes; clear wings.

Male: Eyes bright blue, face whitish above, bluer in front. Appendages simple but its cerci has an obvious ventral tubercle in side view at about one-third length

Female: They are polymorphic but they are heteromorph with eyes usually light brown, stripes are yellow, spots are yellow to white. Andromorph with eyes strongly tinged with blue, thoracic stripes and pale markings on abdomen are blue. Cerci is S9-10 in length and are distinctly narrower than most darners.

Flight Season: California Feb-Aug

Habitat: Marshy ponds, lakes, and slow streams; found foraging along clearings; in wooded or open country

Notes: It's one of the first dragonflies that will appear in the spring throughout the northern part of range (California, etc.). But unlike most darners that emerge during midsummer these darners are not around at that time

Rhionaeschna multicolor (Blue-Eyed Darner)



(Thomas Langhan

Description: Large dragonfly; abdomen patterned black, blue, and brown; thorax brown with two stripes in front; bright blue eyes; clear wings

Male: Eyes and face bright sky-blue, thoracic stripes are pale blue

Female: Polymorphic. Heteromorph with brown eyes and yellow body markings. Andromorph with blue-tinged eyes and face, yellow to blue-green stripes on thorax, and blue spots on abdomen

Habitat: All kinds of lakes, ponds, slow streams, and canals, especially common in highly productive, open marshy lakes and in open rather than wooded areas

Flight Season: California: March-December

Calopterygidae

Fun Facts:

- Only two genera are found in North America
- They have really broad wings with colored patches
- The patches get brighter in males when defending their territory or when trying to court a female damselfly

Hetaerina americana (American Rubyspot)



(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_rubyspot)

Description: Medium damselfly; MALE: metallic black and bronze body; bright red spots at base of wings; FEMALE: similar, but red spots seen on male may be orange or absent.

Habitat: Streams

Flight season: February-November

Coenagrionidae

Fun Facts:

- 78% of CA damselflies are part of this family
- Made up of 3 groups: dancers, forktails, and bluets
- Despite dancers being called “Argia” which means “laziness,” they are actually really active and alert
- Males are predominantly blue and black while females are tan and black
- 8 forktail species in California, most distinctive feature is their forked tails

Argia agrioides (California Dancer)



<http://creagrus.home.montereybay.com/CaliforniaDancer.html>

Description: Medium damselfly; mostly blue and black dancer; lacks triangles on abdomen of Vivid Dancer, lacks purple color of Emma's Dancer. Very similar to Vivid dancers, Lavender Dancers, and Aztec Dancers.

Habitat: Flowing water, ranging from creeks to rivers, irrigation canals, often frequent large and deep streams

Flight Season: April-first week of November

Note: They are often found away from water on dirt paths or gravelly clearings

Argia emma (Emma Dancer)



<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/94542-Argia-emma>

Description: Medium damselfly; long-legged with a thin dark central stripe on top of thorax distinctive from all similar species.

Male: mostly lavender body with blue abdomen tip

Female: tan to blue body

Habitat: Streams, particularly rivers, occasionally lakeshores, shores of creeks, sloughs, and sandy shorelines

Flight Season: March-September

Note: It has one of the most northern distributions of damselflies, starting all the way in southern British Columbia

Argia vivida (Vivid Dancer)



<https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/nevada/state-insect/vivid-dancer-damselfly>

Description: Medium damselfly; mostly blue and black dancer; separable from other dancers by distinctive backward-facing triangles on abdominal segments.

Male: young vivids' patches are initially chalky white, then lavender gray, tan, then they become vibrant blue or violet once they hit maturity

Females: similar, but more brown and often stay a lighter blue at maturity than the males. Very rarely do they become as bright as males.

Habitat: ubiquitous, spring runs, seeps, rivulets and streams. They can also breed in artificial drains and irrigation ditches in rural areas.

Flight Season: All year round in California. In most low-lying areas they typically fly from March-October

Enallagma annexum (Northern Bluet)



(John and Jane Balaban)

Description: Small damselfly; Males are one of the brightest blue bluets, particularly in above the middle segments 3-5.

Females: Have pale markings that are either tan, green, gray, or blue.

Habitat: All aquatic habitats. Mostly favor more humid regions

Note: Difficult to decipher from other Bluets in the field, especially Boreal Bluets. In comparison to the Boreal, Northern Bluets have an upturned hook projecting from the lower tip of their superior appendages

Enallagma boreale (Boreal Bluet)



(Jim Boone)

Description: Small damselfly; more blue than black, Black stripe on side of thorax is not uniformly thick. Very similar to Northern Bluets

Females: Segment 8 has a distinctive pattern, fairly pale with a black triangle

Habitat: Sagebrush desert, mountain lakes, creeks, swampy areas, It is found near sea level along the coast and at elevations above 1200m in the interior

Flight Season: Late April-early September

Enallagma carunculatum (Tule Bluet)



(http://www.thehibbitts.net/troy/photo/odonata/tule_bluet.htm)

Description: Small damselfly; mostly blue and black body; see appendages.

Males: show least amount of blue on abdomen of bluets, pale lobe extending from tip of superior appendage

Habitat: Ponds, lakes, and streams with tules (Scirpus), rivers and streams with emergent vegetation, rice fields, sewage ponds

Flight Season: February-November

Enallagma civile (Familiar Bluet)



(Mary Ramussen)

Description: larger bluet; mostly blue and black body; see appendages.

Male: young males are seen away from water and have pale areas that are light blue or lavender-gray. Cerci are large and fin-shaped with a pale, triangular lobe along trailing edge

Female: very similar to other bluets. Vary from pale tan, green, gray, and blue

Habitat: Artificial water bodies, disturbed river sites, freshwater sites affected by human activity

Flight Season: March- early December

Enallagma praevarum (Arroyo Bluet)



(Gary McDonald)

Description: Small damselfly; mostly blue and black body; see appendages.

Habitat: Open ponds and slow moving streams

Flight Season: March- October

Ischnura cervula (Pacific Forktail)



(Craig Morgan)

Description: Small damselfly

Male: mostly black with blue sides of thorax. Four dots in each corner on the top of the thorax is distinctive.

Female: variable.

Habitat: All slow-moving or sedentary water feature, most breeding sites have the water surface coated with algae

Flight Season: year-round

Note: most prone to wander to forage in weedy fields and suburban yards

Ischnura denticollis (Black Fronted Forktail)



<http://azdragonfly.org/species/black-fronted-forktail>

Description: Very small damselfly; mostly black body with blue-green under abdomen; blue tip of abdomen; thorax blue-green with solid black top; see appendages to differentiate from San Francisco Forktail.

Male: thorax is solid iridescent black on top, green or aqua on the sides

Female: andromorphic female resembles males, gynomorphic female has a central stripe on the thorax black, pale lateral stripes separated from the pale side by a thin, black stripe

Habitat: Ponds and pools surrounded by sedges and grasses in arid areas.

Flight Season: March to November

Notes: weak-flying, delicate, they do not wander very far. Females typically oviposit in tandem with males

Ischnura erratica (Swift Forktail)



(Jim Johnson)

Description: large damselfly; mostly black abdomen with blue-green tip; blue-green thorax with two long black stripes on top. Green stripe on the face

Male: forewing is bicolored, black toward base of wing and tawny toward the tip.

Female: all females have tan pterostigma and lack prominent vulvar spine. Andromorphic female similar to male, but blue areas may be greener. Gynomorphic female has a pale head, green thorax, mostly black abdominals with green rings near base

Habitat: Ponds and lakes surrounded by lush foliage. Clear, shallow-watered lakes with emergent vegetation. Mostly seen at locations at sea level.

Flight Season: late March-June, rarely seen in September

Ischnura gemina (San Francisco Forktail)



http://www.sonic.net/~shwand/odonata/san_francisco_forktail.htm

Description: Basically a twin of Black-fronted Forktail. Very small damselfly; mostly black body with blue-green under abdomen; blue tip of abdomen; thorax blue-green with solid black top; see appendages to differentiate from Black-fronted Forktail.

Male: cerci have a blunt, dorsal lobe projecting rearward. Sides of thorax are generally more blue than on Black-fronted Forktail.

Female: does not have protuberances on the prothorax.

Habitat: Small ponds and ditches, often with floating vegetation. Not found far from water

Note: They behave much like Black-fronted Forktails, they only wander short distances from water.

Flight Season: March-November

Ischnura perparva (Western Forktail)



(http://www.thehibbits.net/troy/photo/odonata/western_forktail.htm)

Description: Small damselfly; mostly black abdomen with blue-green tip; blue-green thorax with two on black.

Male: eyes are black on top and green on bottom. Abdomen is mostly iridescent-black on top and yellow or green at bottom. Green spot beside each eye.

Female: stout, especially in the abdomen. Young gynomorphic female has similar head and thorax pattern to male, but pale areas are orange and the abdomen is black. When mature the pale areas are a dull green.

Habitat: Ponds, lakes, and streams surrounded by vegetation. May forage over nearby grassy areas.

Flight season: March-November

Notes: tame damselflies that make short, low flights above dense beds of sedges and grasses. Females typically oviposit alone

Telebasis salva (Desert Firetail)



(Fyn Kynd)

Description: Very small damselfly; entirely red body and eyes; clear wings.

Male: long, slender abdomen. Eyes are scarlet red. Thorax has two parallel, black dorsal bars separated by a thin, pale midline

Female: Similar to male except duller and tawny brown.

Habitat: Most sedentary water bodies, must have dense, floating mats of algae and duckweed (Lemna)

Flight Season: April-October

Note: tend to stick tight in dense, marshy cover, easy to miss

Zoniagrion exclamationis (Exclamation Damselfly)



(Eugene Zelenko)

Description: Medium damselfly; mostly black with teal stripes on thorax. Stripes on top of thorax form a distinctive exclamation mark. Somewhat resemble American Bluets

Females: Males and females are pretty similar, however many females and some males have dorsal thoracic stripes constricted rather than interrupted. Female has pronounced vulvar spine, and the older females maybe darker, with blue areas becoming purplish.

Habitat: streams with lush emergent vegetation

Flight Season: March-first week of August

Cordulegastridae

Cordulegaster dorsalis (Pacific Spiketail)



(Steve Valley)

Description: Large dragonfly; black and yellow patterned abdomen and thorax; bright blue eyes; yellow face.

Male: Eyes pale blue above, darker below; face pale tan with one or two dark bars across it. Thorax dark brown with vivid yellow stripes on front and sides. Abdomen blackish with yellow spots on S2-9, slightly divided on midline and getting wider and shorter towards rear. From Owens Valley of California into Nevada, they have much more yellow on their body, often with narrow yellow stripes between wide ones on thorax and extra small spots along the abdomen.

Female: Colored as male, recognized by long pointed ovipositor.

Habitat: Creeks. Small cool streams with some current in forested areas; substrate can be sand or mud mixed with rocks. In Northern part of range, warmer streams coming out of low land lakes in southern, faster streams in mountains and foothills.

Flight Season: California: May-October

Gomphidae

Ophiogomphus bison (Bison Snaketail)



(<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/70084-Ophiogomphus-bison>)

Description: Medium dragonfly; yellow and black abdomen; green and brown thorax; green face with blue eyes.

Male: Eyes blue to dark turquoise, face chartreuse and thorax is green. Abdomen yellow-orange, mostly dark brown to black on sides forming series of pale triangles down entire abdomen; white low on sides of S1-3, yellow-orange on sides of S7-10

Female: Colored as male. Conspicuous pair of horns project from either side of center occiput.

Habitat: Fast flowing creeks and small rivers with willows and gravel bars. Swift rocky streams bordered by willows, mostly in forested habitats, from lowlands to well up in the mountains.

Flight Season: California: April-October

Octogomphus specularis (Grappletail)



(Bill Bouton)

Description: Small dragonfly; thin black abdomen; black and pale colored thorax; black head with white face; dark blue-green eyes.

Male: Eyes dull greenish to bluish above, yellowish below, but may look mostly dark brown, unusual color among clubtails; face and thorax are yellow. Abdomen is almost entirely black with fine pale stripes down S1-6 or S7. Cerci yellow and wider than the abdomen.

Female: Abdomen slightly thicker, straight-sided throughout.

Both sexes are bright yellow when young, become grayish-cream with age.

Habitat: Wooded rocky creeks and small rivers usually bounded by steep slopes. Small rocky or muddy woodland streams with moderate current, rocky and muddy bottom. In northern part of range, typically in relatively warm streams that flow out of lakes.

Flight Season: California: April-October

Phanogomphus kurilis (Pacific Clubtail)



<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/520944-Phanogomphus-kurilis>

Description: Medium dragonfly; cream and black abdomen; cream and brown thorax; pale face with blue eyes.

Male: Eyes blue, face pale. Abdomen black with pale dorsal spear points on S2-7; pale triangle on S8 just reaches half segment; reminder black above, but S9 variable, from black to fair-sized dorsal triangle. Tiny basal lateral spots on S4-7, larger yellow spots on S8-9 do not reach the end of segment.

Female: Colored as male, with a bit more extensive yellow and less indication of club

Habitat: Streams and rivers with good currents, sandy to muddy bottoms. Also occurs in large ponds and lakes and may be limited to them in northern part of range and high in the Sierras

Flight Season: California: Mar-Aug

Stylurus olivaceus (Olive Clubtail)



(Mark Chappell)

Description: Large dragonfly; black and pale body; pale face and bright blue eyes; clear wings.

Male: Eyes bright blue, face pale. Thorax with brown stripes. Abdomen black with pale stripe on S1-2, spearpoint on S3, same reduced to triangles with narrow midline extension on S4-9. Sides of S1-3 pale, basal spots and short streak in the middle on S4-6, large pale spots reaching about halfway down segment on S7-9, entire side of S10.

Female: Colored as male, but stripes on sides of thorax may be indistinct; much more yellow on sides of abdomen, most segments largely pale. Populations of arid interior paler all over, with thoracic stripes narrower; much less black on the abdomen, with continuous dorsal stripe and sides entirely pale. They look ringed because black dorsolateral stripes widely interrupted.

Habitat: Typically large, warm, mid-bottom rivers, usually with sandy banks, in or out of woodland. Occurs down the Columbia River to where it rises and falls with tidal influences.

Flight Season: California: Jun-Sep

Lestidae

Fun Facts:

- Distinctive, medium to large damselflies
- Spread their wings when perched similarly to dragonflies
- 7 species of spreadwings found in CA
- Stream Spreadwings (*Arcgilestes*) occur in CA and they are large and easily identifiable

Archilestes californicus (California Spreadwing)



(Gerardo Marrón).

Description: Large damselfly; broken pale side stripe on thorax contrary to continuous stripe on Great Spreadwing; looks predominantly brown. Middle segments may have green iridescence. Incomplete whitish stripe along side of thorax

Male: while females and males are similar, male has bright blue eyes above and develops gray pruinescence on segments 9 and 10.

Habitat: Intermittent streams and pools surrounded by willows and alders. Found in Washington, Idaho, and into southern California.

Flight Season: may be as early as June, but most often seen in September-first half of November.

Note: quick and agile fly catchers. Prone to flying up and into vegetation when alarmed

Archilestes grandis (Great Spreadwing)



<https://www.odonatacentral.org/index.php/FieldGuideAction.get/id/43736>

Description: California's largest damselfly; continuous pale stripe on side of thorax; dark, mostly black thorax with bright green highlights. Middle segments are green on top

Male: mature male has nearly black pterostigma, paraprocts are divergent.

Female: similar to males, pterostigma is paler

Habitat: Intermittent streams, flowing water. Coexist in many sights with California Spreadwing

Flight Season: late July to mid-January, September-October.

Note: They behave much like the California Spreadwing.

Lestes disjunctus (Common Spreadwing)



(Jim Moore)

Description: Medium damselfly; brown to black body with variable thorax pattern; bright blue eyes.

Male: distinctive frosty blue gray above as a result of heavy pruinescence, mainly on thorax. Paraprocts are long and straight

Female: resembles other spreadwings. Prominent pale blue lateral stripes on dark thorax. Pale underside of thorax has a small dark spot on the side near the front. Head may develop some pruinescence with age.

Habitat: Most sedentary water bodies bordered by emergent vegetation such as lakes, bogs, ponds, and slow streams

Flight Season: July-September

Lestes dryas (Emerald Spreadwing)



(<https://bugguide.net/node/view/12144>)

Description: Medium damselfly; metallic black abdomen with pruinose tip; pruinose-blue abdomen; bright blue eyes. Stocky and robust. Emerald or blue green color on top of thorax and abdomen.

Female: May be duller bronzy green above, teneral is bronze and tan. Abdominal appendages are like those of the Black Spreadwing.

Habitat: Ephemeral water bodies surrounded by emergent vegetation

Flight Season: June- August

Lestes stultus (Black Spreadwing)



http://www.thehibbits.net/troy/photo/odonata/black_spreadwing.htm

Description: Medium damselfly; metallic black abdomen and thorax; pruinose abdominal tip; bright blue eyes. See appendages to help differentiate.

Habitat: Ephemeral water bodies surrounded by emergent vegetation

Libellulidae

Erythemis collocata (Western Pondhawk)



<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/85408-Erythemis-collocata>

Description: Medium dragonfly; blue gray body; clear wings; blue eyes with snot green face.

Male: Eyes dark turquoise blue; face green. Entire body pruinose blue (S10 may remain black), appendages are black. Immatures look like females, with pale appendages; abdomen becomes pruinose before thorax.

Female: Eyes light green, yellowish-brown when immature, may become turquoise in older individuals; face green. Thorax and abdomen green, may shade to yellowish-green, yellowish, or light brown on posterior or most abdominal segments. Appendages are pale.

Habitat: Wide variety of still waters, from lake shores and ponds to canals, slow streams, and springs. Often at hot springs in the northern part of interior range.

Flight Season: California: February- November

Libellula forensis (Eight-Spotted Skimmer)



(Paul Marto)

Description: Medium dragonfly; pale gray abdomen and thorax; dark eyes and face; strongly patterned black and white wings with pale tips.

Male: Eyes dark brown; face brown Thorax dark brown with a pair of elongated yellow spots low on the sides, front whitish pruinose. Abdomen entirely whitish pruinose with maturity. Each wing with two big black spots, long basal one and transverse one just past the nodus; white patches beyond each dark markings that develop with age.

Female: Eyes dark brown; face brown. Thorax brown with spots just like the male. Abdomen dark brown to black with a line of elongated yellow spots on each side of the middle, almost forming stripes, getting lower on sides of segment to rear and ending on S8. Wings on female are polymorphic, typically developing white spots as male in drier regions, without them in wetter regions, but both in some populations.

Habitat: All kinds of ponds and lakes, and streams with dense emergent vegetation and open water.

Flight Season: California: April-October

Libellula luctuosa (Widow Skimmer)



(Jeff Jarrett)

Description: Big showy skimmer with dark wing bases

Male: pruinose abdomen; thorax brown on sides, pruinose on top; wings patterned brown and white. Abdomen entirely pruinose white above.

Female: Eyes brown; face light brown. Thorax brown with large tan spots low on sides. Abdomen with black central stripe widening toward rear, bordered by wide yellow stripes on each side; brown low on sides at base. Wing bases become dark but not as dark as male and without pruinosity; extreme tips also dark.

Habitat: Lakes, ponds, and pools in slow streams of all kinds with mud bottom and usually a lot of vegetation, in open and wooded habitats. Common at farm ponds and other created habitats.

Flight Season: California: May-October

Libellula pulchella (Twelve-Spotted Skimmer)



(<http://azdragonfly.org/species/twelve-spotted-skimmer>)

Description: Medium dragonfly; pale abdomen; dark thorax, head, and eyes; strongly patterned black and white wings with dark tips. Rare individuals lack apical wing spots.

Male: Eyes dark brown; face brown, paler on sides. Thorax brown with two pale stripes on each side, gray above and bright yellow below. Abdomen pruinose gray, underlying female-like pattern often showing through. Wings with three large dark spots, at the base, nodus, and tip; pruinose white spots almost fill in clear areas between the dark spots.

Female: Similar to the male but thoracic stripes are all yellow. Abdomen broadly brown above, continuous yellow stripe down each side. No pruinosity on wings.

Habitat: Lakes and ponds with emergent vegetation, in Northwest commonly smaller and marshier ponds than those preferred by Eight-Spotted Skimmers.

Libellula saturata (Flame Skimmer)



<http://albumarium.com/5578742276707375b8bd2a00-dragonfly/5579d28f767073724ccf4500>

Description: Large dragonfly; completely orange-red body with orange-red wash on wings

Male: Eyes red-orange; face orange. Thorax and abdomen orange. Wings with most of base orange-brown; veins bright orange. Also there are small dark marks at the base of each wing.

Female: Eyes and face are brown. The thorax and abdomen are a pale brown, sometimes orange tinged; only prominent markings are thin white lines up the front of the thorax between the wing base. Usually less color in wings than the male but they have the same patterning. Occasional females also have bright orange body and have a lot of orange in the wings.

Habitat: Ponds, lakes, and slow streams, very broad habitat selection. Sufficiently common to be seen almost everywhere, including some distance from water.

Flight Season: California: Feb-December

Pachydiplax Longipennis (Blue Dasher)



<https://waltersanford.wordpress.com/2012/06/08/blue-dasher-dragonfly-male/>

Description: Small dragonfly; blue-gray body; green eyes; white face.

Habitat: Sedentary ephemeral and permanent bodies of water

Paltothemis lineatipes (Red Rock Skimmer)



(Dave Welling)

Description: Medium dragonfly; MALE: abdomen and thorax patterned deep red and black; eyes, head, and face red; amber wash at base of wings. FEMALE: similarly patterned, but mostly beige and brown.

Habitat: Rocky streams

Pantala flavescens (Wandering Glider)



(<http://azdragonfly.org/species/wandering-glider>)

Description: Medium dragonfly; abdomen and thorax patterned beige and dark brown; reddish eyes; clear wings with no spots.

Habitat: ephemeral ponds and rainpools, migrants can be found anywhere

Pantala hymenaea (Spot-Winged Glider)



(<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/52584-Pantala-hymenaea>)

Description: Medium dragonfly; abdomen and thorax patterned beige and dark brown; reddish eyes; clear wings with one dark spot at the base of the trailing edge on each hind wing.

Location: ephemeral ponds and rainpools, migrants can be found anywhere

Plathemis lydia (Common Whitetail)



(Matt Weldon)

Description: Medium dragonfly; prunoise abdomen; dark thorax, head, face, and eyes; wings patterned dark brown and white.

Male: Eyes and face dark brown. Thorax dark brown with two faintly indicated pale stripes on each side. Abdomen white (some see it as a pale blue) with ptuinosity when mature. Wide black crossband near tip and black streak at base of each wing, white behind basal streak at maturity. Immature with spotted abdomen as female but typical male wing pattern: becomes gradually bluish-whitie, then white.

Female: Eyes and face brown. Thorax brown with two white stripes on the side of the thorax, turning yellow at lower ends. Abdomen brown with white to pale yellow spots along each side, forming lines on S2-3 and extending diagonally on S4-8. Pale spots outlined in black. Three dark spots on each wing, quite different from male.

Just emerged (younger age): they only show very faint wing spots, but distinctive abdominal pattern.

Habitat: Lakes, ponds, marshes, river pools, slow streams (including those constructed by humans). Larvae on mud bottom and tolerant of a wide range of conditions.

Flight Season: California: March-October

Sympetrum corruptum (Variegated Meadowhawk)



<http://azdragonfly.org/species/variegated-meadowhawk>

Description: Small dragonfly; multicolored abdomen; brown thorax with two side stripes with yellow dot at the base of each stripe; red to lavender eyes and face.

Male: Eyes red above, pinkish to gray below; face red in front, brownish on sides. Thorax brown with a pair of small bright yellow spots on either side. Abdomen overall reddish, but complexly patterned brown and red at close range. Younger males (common away from breeding habitats) patterned as females, with white lateral spots persisting, but with red on abdomen.

Female: Eyes and face brownish-tan. Thorax brown with yellow spots just like the male. Abdomen brown with whitish lateral spots on S3-8. Sutures between segments richer orange-brown. Anterior wing veins are yellow.

Habitat: Open freshwater features near the coast when breeding, migrants can be found anywhere. Breeding habitat shallow open or marshy lakes and ponds. Also pools with shore vegetation in streams and rivers.

Flight Season: California: All year

Sympetrum illotum (Cardinal Meadowhawk)



<https://www.projectnoah.org/spottings/1953728542>

Description: Small dragonfly; body entirely cardinal red; two white spots on side of thorax.

Male: Their eyes are red above and tan below; face is red-orange above, tan-orange below. Entire body is scarlet-red, thorax with with two vivid pale yellow spots low on each side. Wings with anterior and basal veins reddish, dark brown basal streaks in all wings, larger in hindwings.

Female: Patterned as male, but body either brown or reddish, wither polymorphic or changes with age. Stout-bodied in comparison with other meadowhawks.

Habitat: Lakes and ponds in northern part of range, even very small ones such as backyard pools. More common on pools in rocky streams in southern areas.

Flight Season: California: Jan-Dec

Sympetrum madidum (Red-Veined Meadowhawk)



(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ndomer73/29384054346>)

Description: Small dragonfly; body almost entirely red; black legs; black bottom of the abdomen.

Male: Eyes and face are red. Thorax red, faint indication of black lines on sutures and trace of two pale spots low on each side. Abdomen red, in some with black specks on posterior segments corresponding to areas where other species have more black. Legs are black. Veins on front and base of wings reddish.

Female: Eyes red-brown over pale greenish; face tan. Thorax brown with two broad white stripes on either side, in some individuals fainter whitish stripes on front. Abdomen tan with narrow black lateral stripe on S4-9, whitish areas below that; narrow black median line on S8-9. Some females become red like males, retaining its pattern.

Habitat: Shallow, open, often somewhat saline ponds with abundant emergent vegetation, usually or perhaps always drying up by mid-or late summer. Also marshy pools in small slow-flowing streams, not much associated with open water

Flight Season: California: April-September

Sympetrum semicinctum (Band-Winged Meadowhawk)



(Greg Lasley)

Description: Small dragonfly; abdomen red with black bottom; thorax mostly red; eyes dark red; wings have amber wash.

Male: Eyes red-brown over greenish-tan; face reddish-brown. Thorax reddish-brown with black pattern above legs and two or three narrow black lines extending from legs up towards the wing bases, one of them forked. Abdomen bright red with narrow black dorsolateral stripe on S2-3, conspicuous black ventrolateral stripe on S2-10, black median line on S8-9. Bright red when mature, wing patches dark.

Female: Duller, usually brown on front thorax and yellow sides, black lines more conspicuous. Continuous black on sides of S5-10; wing patches usually paler than those of males. Older females with red on top of abdomen.

Habitat: Most water bodies surrounded by grasses and sedges, croplands and pastures. Open ponds and marshes, usually permanent but sometimes small seepage areas; in open or wooded country. Also spend a lot of time in grassy meadows.

Flight Season: California: April-October

Tramea lacerata (Black Saddlebags)



(Debra Turner)

Description: Large dragonfly; almost entirely black body with thick solid black patches at base of hind wings; black abdomen with occasional single pale middle segment.

Habitat: Ponds, lakes, marshes, and occasionally streams

Tramea Onusta (Red Saddlebags)



https://www.inaturalist.org/guide_taxa/386266

Description: Large dragonfly; almost entirely dark red body with thick solid dark red patches at base of hind wings.

Habitat: Marshy ponds, lakes, and ditches

Fun Facts:

- Hawking dragonflies (Darners, River cruisers, baskettails, emeralds, spiketails, gliders, and saddlebags):
 - fly back and forth along a set path or series of paths over open fields and meadows or along creeks, rivers, and even roads
 - Form feeding swarms most often at dusk in late fall and summer
 - Perch high or in the shade of dense vegetation
- Skimmers and damselflies
 - Typically they sit in exposed situation in order to get a wide field view
 - When they get a meal they'll fly back to their perch (Spreadwings and broad-wings damsel)
 - American Bluets tend to feed by flitting spot to spot picking food off of vegetation in rapid bursts
 - The blue of darners and many damselflies fade to gray at cooler temperature
- In few cases dragonflies seek mates away from water and then escorted there
 - Males typically arrive before females
 - Peak mating time is early morning or early afternoon
 - Seek female from a perch
 - Darners patrol for their mate

- Linkage of male to female is a close fit species-specific body part, which inhibits interspecific mating attempts (good to use for identifying)
- Active in warm sunny areas can be found basking in the sun when perch
 - But note since they are out in the sun often they seek shade, reducing activity
 - Obelisk abdomen pointed towards the sun to minimize the body surface area exposed to direct ray