

DAMSELFLIES and DRAGONFLIES of SOUTH DAKOTA



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT of GAME, FISH and PARKS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was drafted by Casey Heimerl, Wildlife Diversity Biologist for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) and completed by the coauthors listed below. The project benefitted from work by Steve Hummel, an Odonate expert from Iowa. Steve has studied these species for more than 50 years. He surveyed South Dakota Odonates under a Wildlife Diversity Small Grants contract with SDGFP. Another important source of technical information was work conducted by Dennis Skadsen in north-eastern South Dakota.

To help people learn to first identify and secondly appreciate these creatures, high-quality images were needed. Wisconsin Odonate expert Dan Jackson kindly provided the majority of images for this guide. Dan provided all images not credited with a photographer's name.

Additional images were taken from [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org). This community science-based website allows naturalists to submit photos and related observation information. Images are verified by experts and available for others to use under conditions determined by the contributor. Images from iNaturalist used in this guide follow the prescribed guidelines. Labeled drawings of dragonfly adult and larval body parts were obtained from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources MinnAqua Program. The damselfly illustration was downloaded from the Arizona Dragonflies website.

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OBSERVING and COLLECTING ODONATES

There are several ways to identify Odonata. Adults can be observed through binoculars or photographed using a phone and submitting the picture to an identification app like iNaturalist. Some species like darners and many of the damselflies are better identified in-the-hand by capturing with a sweep net. Several field guides for identifying odonates provide more detail on species anatomy useful for identification. A list of identification guides is listed on page 110.

Odonate nymphs can be collected in wetlands and other waterbodies by using aquatic dip nets or kick nets. However, without specialized taxonomic keys and a microscope you'll probably only be able to identify to the genus level.

An interesting way to document dragonfly occurrences without killing specimens is to use a flatbed scanner. Collect the dragonfly and carefully place in a large (1 gallon) Ziploc plastic bag with plenty of air. Place it in a refrigerator until the dragonfly becomes torpid (do not freeze). Quickly spread the dragonfly on the scanner bed. You must use a piece of foam board with a hole in the middle to prevent the scanner lid from crushing or injuring the specimen. For more information on this process visit the Digital Dragonfly website at: <https://agrilife.org/dragonfly/specimen-handling/hardware/>

New county or state records should be documented with a good quality photograph and submitted to Odonata Central.

With this guide, we hope to increase awareness of the amazing dragonflies and damselflies of South Dakota and provide useful information for people exploring and studying the state's natural resources. The guide includes a basic introduction to dragonflies and damselflies, tips for identification, life history information, distribution maps for species found as adults in South Dakota, and a checklist of species known in the state as of 2025.

Introduction

Dragonflies and damselflies are members of the order Odonata, a prehistoric order of insects that dates back in the fossil record more than 237 million years. Currently, more than 6,400 species of dragonflies and damselflies have been identified across the globe. This photographic guide includes a basic introduction to dragonflies and damselflies, tips for identification, life history information, distribution maps for species found in South Dakota, and a checklist of species known in the state as of 2025.

Distribution

Dragonflies and damselflies occur throughout South Dakota. Hummel (2012) documents the history of odonate surveys and collections in South Dakota. With the advent of phone apps that can take detailed photographs, hobbyists and citizen scientists have contributed their observations to online databases like Odonata Central and iNaturalist. As of this publication, the adults of 57 species of dragonflies and 41 species of damselflies have been observed in every county except for Corson and Dewey. Custer County had the highest number of species reported at 68. Brookings County was second, at 61 species. The most common damselflies observed in the state are the Eastern forktail (*Ischnura verticalis*) reported from 56 counties, and the familiar bluet (*Enallagma civile*) reported from 55 of the state's sixty-six counties. The most common dragonfly species are the twelve-spotted skimmer (*Libellula pulchella*) reported from 54 counties, and the common green darner (*Anax junius*) reported from 53 counties.

Most of South Dakota odonates occur statewide. However, several species are found only in the Black Hills, and many of these are disjunct populations, meaning the population is separated from the main portion of the species' range. Four species have been

reported only from east river counties (counties east of the Missouri River). The paucity of records for several species is probably due to the difficulty in capturing or photographing adults, limited range, or habitats that are rarely surveyed. Two of the rarest damselflies are the Kiowa dancer (*Argia immunda*) and sooty dancer (*Argia lugens*), both of which occur in small rocky streams located only in Custer and Fall River counties. The rarest dragonflies include several species from the Clubtail family (Gomphidae). Adults of these dragonflies, which include the jade clubtail (*Ariogomphus submedians*) and russet-tipped clubtail (*Stylarus plagiatus*), only fly above the streambed, making them hard to capture without wading. Table 1 lists the number of species observed for each of South Dakota's sixty-six counties. It is hoped that this guide will encourage people to look for odonates in counties with few species observations and report sightings to the websites mentioned in this guide.

Life History

Dragonflies and damselflies begin life as eggs laid in the water by an adult female. Eggs can be attached to submerged plants or woody debris or simply dropped at the surface to settle on the bottom. From the egg a larva, or nymph, hatches and begins feeding and growing. Odonate nymphs are predacious, consuming aquatic insects and insect larva, crustaceans and even small fish. Note the large eyes typical of predators on both adult and larvae. The nymphs of dragonflies and damselflies can be easily separated. All damselfly nymphs have three caudal gills located on the end of their abdomen (Figure 1) and have the same general shape and appearance. Damselfly nymphs move by crawling or undulating their body in a swimming-type motion, during which the caudal gills help by functioning like a tail.



Figure 1. Damselfly nymph. Note the three tail-like appendages at the end of the abdomen (photo by D. Skadsen)

Dragonfly nymphs lack caudal gills, and depending on the family, have varying shapes. The nymphs of the darner family (Aeshnidae) are long and narrow while those of other families like the clubtails (Gomphidae) and skimmers (Libellulidae) are short and oval shaped. One of the largest nymphs, the common green darner (Figure 2), can be up to two inches in length and is often colored green to camouflage its presence in aquatic vegetation. In addition to crawling, dragonfly nymphs propel themselves in short bursts by expelling water rapidly from their abdomens.

The duration of the nymph stage varies by species and location but may last only a few months in warm climates to several years in cold climates. Nymphs will molt 6-15 times as they grow, varying by species, before one final molt when they climb out of the water and transform into adults shedding their larval exoskeleton (Figure 4). Dragonflies and damselflies undergo what is called incomplete metamorphosis, which means that there is no pupal stage between the larval and adult life stages. In South Dakota, adults are observed from mid-May through late September.

Newly molted adults are not sexually mature and must continue to develop to reach maturity. Adults, like nymphs, are highly predacious, mainly consuming insects. They are skilled fliers, especially dragonflies, which allows them to easily capture prey. Upon reaching maturity, males will defend a territory, and females will seek out the males. During mating the male's abdomen will clasp onto female's thorax or head, while the female's abdomen bends to the male to accept his sperm. Mating pairs can be seen flying or resting clasped together; females may lay eggs with the male still attached.

Adult dragonflies and damselflies can be separated by how they look and fly. Adult dragonflies have eyes that adjoin with each other (except for the Gomphidae). The eyes of damselflies are separated. When perched, dragonflies hold their wings flat, damselflies hold their wings above their bodies. Dragonflies are strong fliers; damselflies have a weak fluttering flight similar to butterflies.

Adult lifespans of dragonflies and damselflies range from a few weeks for damselflies to one to two months for dragonflies. Odonates do not overwinter or hibernate as adults, only as larvae. In colder climates like South Dakota, larvae enter a state of torpor called diapause during winter months under the ice of their aquatic breeding habitats. Adult dragonflies and damselflies are often observed some distance from their breeding habitat. Some species of dragonflies migrate south for the winter. The best known, the common green darner (*Anax junius*) are often observed in large swarms flying south in the fall to warmer climates.

Ecological Value

During the eons Odonates have existed, they have played important roles in aquatic and riparian ecosystems by serving as both predators and prey for larger predators such as frogs, birds and fish. Beyond their contribution to aquatic and riparian ecosystems, Odonates benefit people by being one of the primary predators of mosquitos and helping to control their populations. Dragonflies and damselflies require good environmental conditions and are indicators of healthy aquatic ecosystems. Declining water quality, habitat loss and increased use of pesticides pose substantial threats to Odonates. Dragonfly and damselfly nymphs are considered somewhat tolerant of water pollution. Some families like the Gomphidae need water with high oxygen levels, typically found in clean fast flowing creeks and rivers.



Figure 2. Common green darner nymph (photo by D. Skadsen)



Figure 3. Shed larval shell (exuvia) of a dragonfly nymph
(photo by D. Skadsen)

Breeding Habitat

Dragonflies and damselflies breed in a variety of aquatic environments (Figures 4-8). They are found in both lentic (still water) and lotic (flowing waters) waterbodies. Lentic waterbodies include wetlands, also known as marshes, sloughs, and potholes; natural lakes; man-made reservoirs, stock dams and ponds; flooded quarries and gravel pits. Important lentic waterbodies in South Dakota include the prairie potholes and glacial lakes of the northeast and east central regions of the state. In the drier western half of the state, man-made stock dams and ponds provide habitat for odonates. Lotic waterbodies include creeks and rivers of varying size, depth, flows, and temperature.

Odonates live in both warm-water and cold-water streams. Cold-water streams are found in the Black Hills and flowing from the eastern escarpment of the Prairie Coteau in the northeast corner of the state. Other lotic habitats include springs and seepages. These occur where groundwater exits the ground. Some seepage areas, called fens, are covered with a layer of peat. These habitats are probably under surveyed for odonates. In 2020, two adult racket-tailed emeralds (*Dorocordulia libera*), previously unknown in the state, were collected from springs located in Roberts and Deuel counties.

Adult dragonflies are often found some distance from water. Meadowhawks, as the name implies, are often seen flying about grassy meadows or even lawns in cities. Darners are another group of dragonflies that are often observed away from their aquatic breeding habitat.

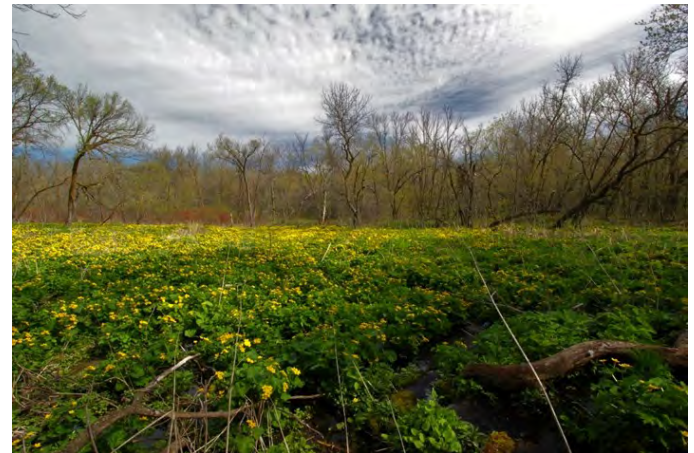
The species descriptions in this guide denote the type of aquatic habitat where each species of dragonfly or damselfly may occur.



Figure 4. Prairie pothole wetland (photo by D. Skadsen)



Figure 5. Small, forested spring-fed creek in northeastern SD (photo by D. Skadsen)



6 Figure 6. Seepage area at Sica Hollow State Park (photo by D. Skadsen)



Figure 7. Glacial lake with bulrush (photo by D. Skadsen)



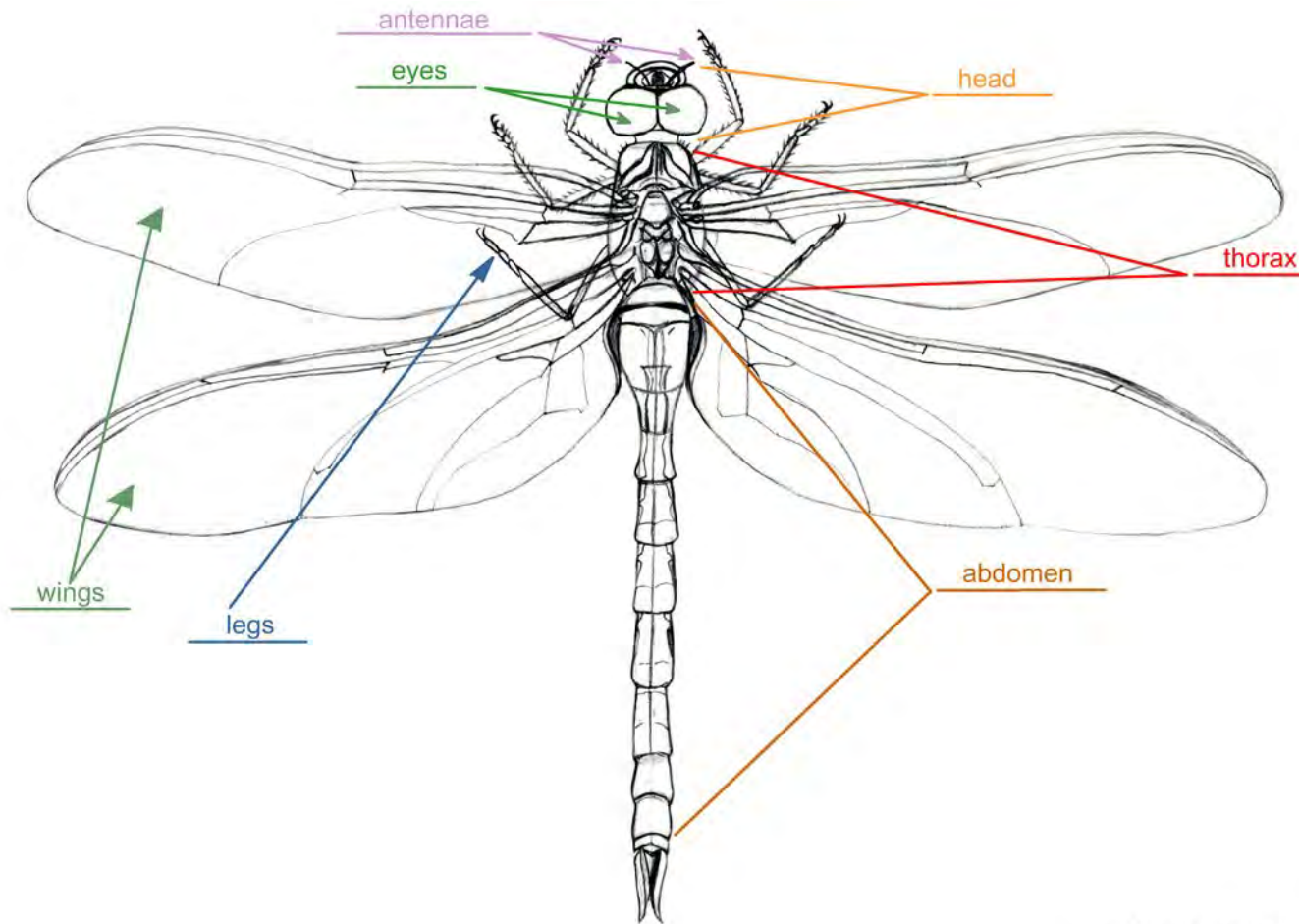
Figure 8. Black Hills stream (photo by D. Skadsen)

How to tell a dragonfly from a damselfly

A dragonfly has a more robust body than a damselfly and a larger head and eyes (Figure 9). Additionally, when at rest they spread their wings with two on each side of the thorax. As with adults, dragonfly nymphs are larger and more robust than damselfly nymphs and their abdomen lacks caudal gills (Figure 10). In addition to crawling, they propel themselves in short bursts by expelling water rapidly from their abdomens.

Damselflies are typically smaller than dragonflies with a smaller body and a long thin abdomen (Figure 11). They have large eyes, but their head and eyes are smaller in proportion to their body compared to dragonflies. At rest, damselflies hold their wings together above their thorax and abdomen, except for members of the Lestidae family (spreadwing damselflies), which rest with their wings open, like dragonflies. Damselfly nymphs have long thin bodies. Their abdomen has three caudal gills at the end giving them a passing resemblance to mayfly nymphs. Dam-

selfly nymphs move by crawling or undulating their body in a swimming-type motion, with caudal gills functioning like a tail.



©MN DNR, G. Mikel

Figure 9. Adult dragonfly body parts; courtesy of Minnesota DNR MinnAqua Program.

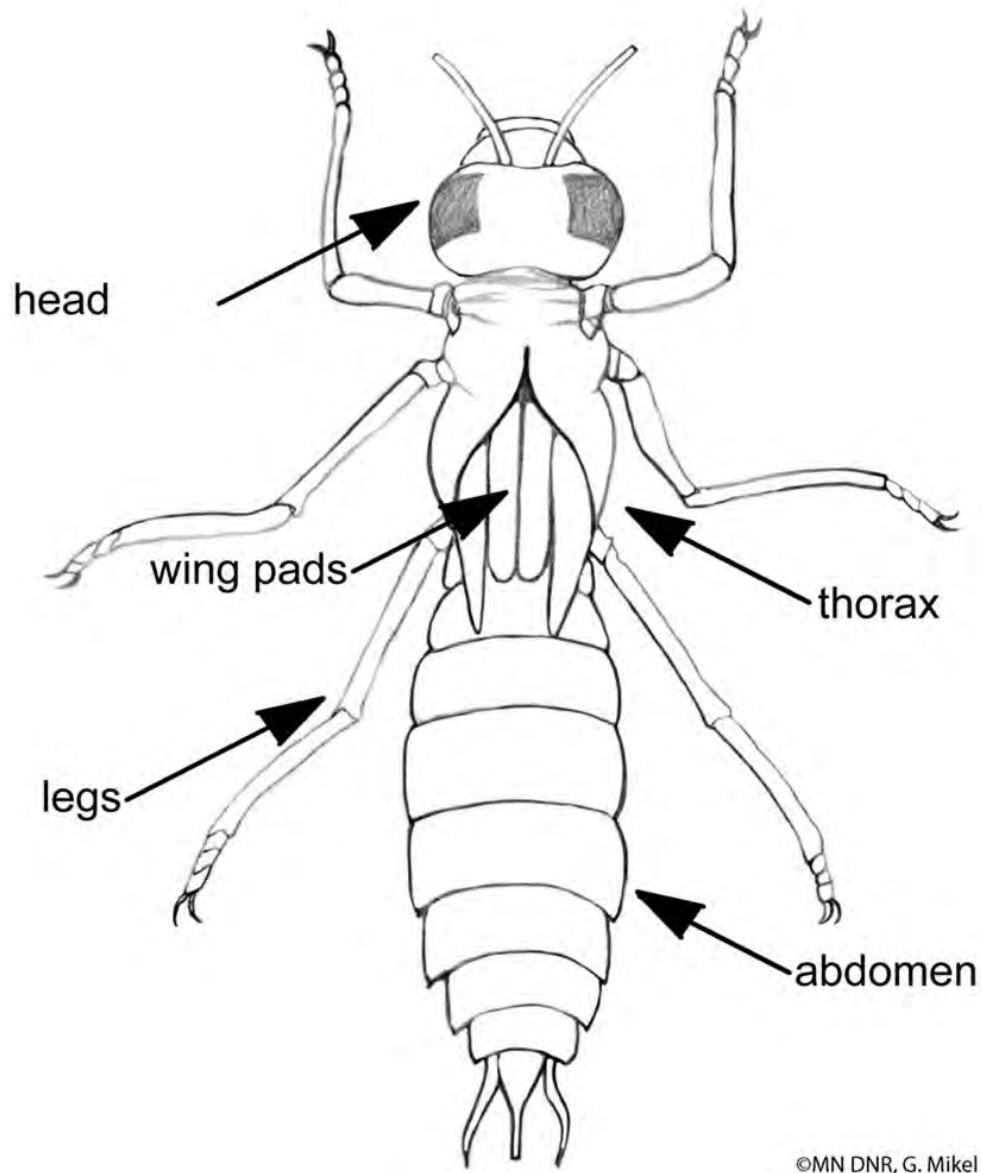


Figure 10. Larval dragonfly body parts; courtesy of Minnesota DNR MinnAqua Program.

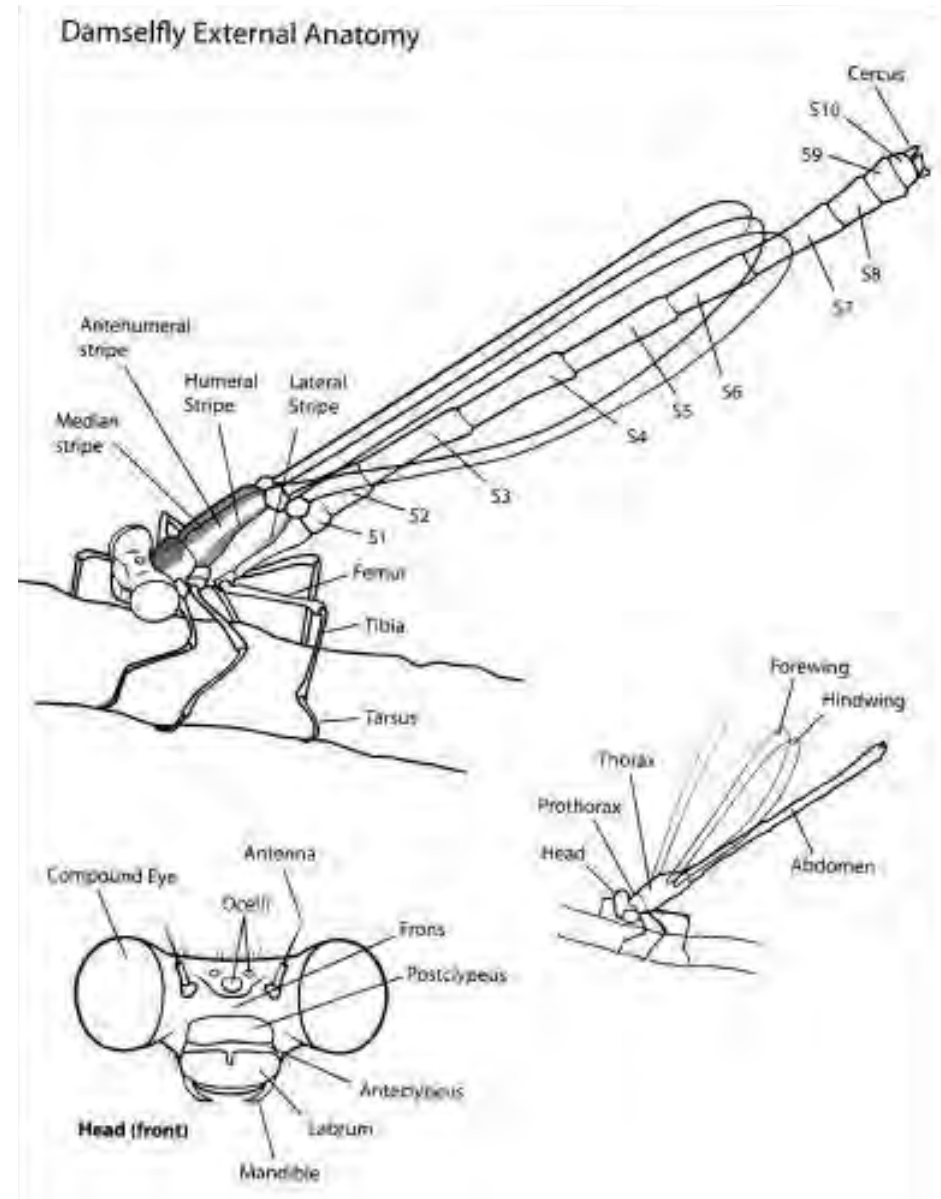


Figure 11. Damselfly downloaded from Arizona Dragonflies website: <http://azdragonfly.org/external-anatomy>; © Pierre Deviche

SOUTH DAKOTA COUNTIES



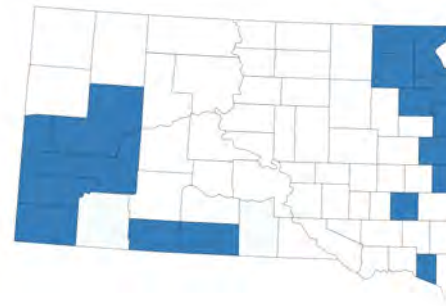
Table 1. Number of Species By County

County	# Species	County	# Species
Custer	68	Aurora	19
Brookings	61	Hand	19
Pennington	59	Miner	19
Fall River	54	Moody	19
Lawrence	50	Tripp	19
Minnehaha	49	Beadle	18
Todd	45	Bon Homme	18
Day	44	Clark	18
Yankton	42	Hanson	18
Lincoln	38	Bennett	17
Roberts	38	Edmunds	17
Marshall	35	Hutchinson	17
Charles Mix	33	Lyman	17
McCook	32	Butte	16
Grant	31	Hamlin	15
Codington	30	Jerauld	15
Hughes	29	McPherson	15
Meade	29	Kingsbury	14
Union	28	Campbell	12
Deuel	27	Haakon	12
Clay	26	Sanborn	12
Lake	26	Spink	12
Harding	24	Hyde	11
Davison	23	Sully	9
Brule	22	Buffalo	8
Stanley	22	Oglala Lakota	8
Brown	21	Perkins	8
Jackson	21	Faulk	7
Jones	21	Walworth	7
Turner	21	Ziebach	5
Douglas	20	Potter	4
Gregory	20	Corson	0
Mellette	20	Dewey	0

Broad-winged Damselflies



Male River Jewelwing



Description: Broad-winged damselfly with dark wing bands and bright metallic green body. *Male:* Glossy body with blue reflections, wings are clear at the base. Eyes are dark brown. *Female:* Duller body with more bronze coloration. Dark wing bands are less evident.

Wings have small white spots near tip.

Similar Species: The **Ebony Jewelwing** has solid black wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Small to medium sized clear rivers and streams with areas of submergent aquatic vegetation. Often found near stream riffles and rarely observed far from water. Males can be observed in flight along shorelines, but more typically while perched and defending their territories.



Female River Jewelwing



Pair of River Jewelwings in copulation

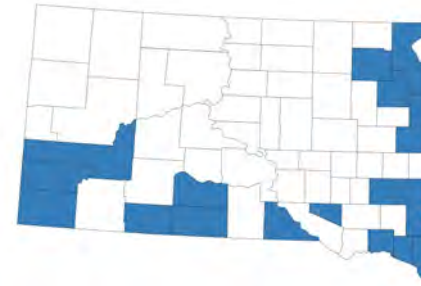
Broad-winged Damselflies



Male Ebony Jewelwing



Female Ebony Jewelwing



Description: Broad-winged damselfly with strong iridescent blue-green coloration on body and solid black wings. *Male:* Bright metallic green body with dark brown eyes and black wings. *Female:* Slightly duller body, wings have white spots near tip and are often duller in color.

Similar Species: The only damselfly with metallic green body and solid black wings. The River Jewelwing typically only has black on the tips of the wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving woodland streams. Trees provide important nighttime roosting habitat. Observed near water during the day, males often defend territories around patches of submerged and floating vegetation. Both sexes can be observed “wing clapping”, slowly opening their wings and suddenly closing them.



Pair of Ebony Jewelwings

Broad-winged Damselflies



Male American Rubyspot

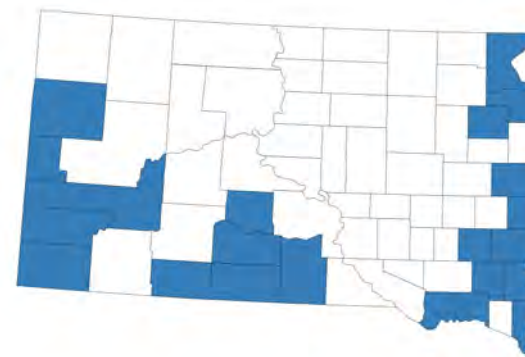


Female American Rubyspot

Description: Large damselfly with red wing bases. *Male:* Dark red-brown eyes, iridescent green to black abdomen with a red head, thorax and base to wing. *Female:* Duller than male. Eyes brown and tan, body iridescent green and amber colored wings with red bases.

Similar Species: No other damselfly in South Dakota has red bases to wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Wide streams and rivers of moderate to rapid flow with submerged and shoreline vegetation. Both sexes can be observed during the day perching on overhanging and partially submerged vegetation and rocks. Flight is low and fast over water.



Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Great Spreadwing



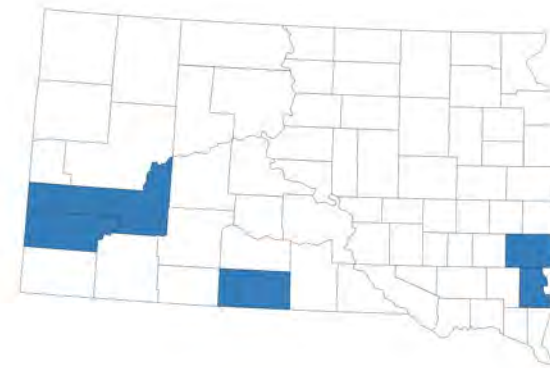
Female Great Spreadwing

Description: Largest damselfly in SD. Wings are clear with dark tips.

Male: Blue eyes and labrum. Thorax is a dull green-bronze above and pale below with a bright yellow stripe on side. The abdomen is dark with a light blue tip developing pruinosity at maturity. *Female:* Brown eyes. Similar but duller coloration than male. Enlarged tip to abdomen lacks pruinosity.

Similar Species: No other damselfly in SD is as large as the Great Spreadwing.

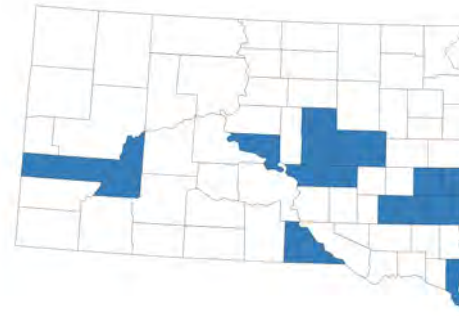
Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Wooded small ponds and slow-moving streams.



Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Southern Spreadwing



Description: *Male:* Bright blue face and eyes, front of thorax metallic brown/black with light brown antehumeral stripe turning blue with maturity. Abdomen metallic green above and light yellow/brown below. *Female:* Colored similar to male, antehumeral stripe tan.

Similar Species: Can be difficult to distinguish from **Northern** and **Sweetflag Spreadwings**. The **Northern** Spreadwing is typically smaller in length. The **Southern** Spreadwing typically does not develop a completely gray thorax with maturity.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving ponds and marshes with moderate vegetation.



Female Southern Spreadwing



Pair of Southern Spreadwings

Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Spotted Spreadwing

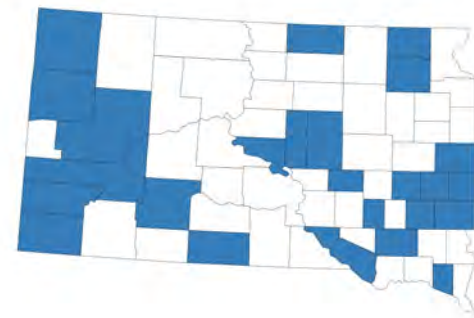


Female Spotted Spreadwing

Description: Spreadwing with a bicolored thorax with prominent spots on the underside. *Male:* Blue eyes. Thorax slightly metallic brownish – gray with a narrow tan antehumeral stripe. Underside of thorax has a pair of dark spots that are barely visible from the side view. Abdomen brown, darker metallic frown above. *Female:* Blueish-brown eyes. Patterned similar to male but lacks the whiteish tip to abdomen.

Similar Species: When observed in hand, no other species has a pair of dark spots on the underside of the thorax.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of ponds and lakes with emergent vegetation. One of the latest flying damselflies within its range. Roosts mainly in woodlands in the canopy of trees. Males and pairs can be seen in abundance near water.



Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Northern Spreadwing

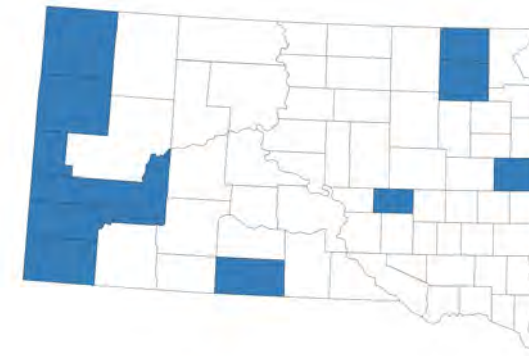


Female Northern Spreadwing

Description: *Male:* Thorax dark above with greenish stripes and pale colored sides. Abdomen dark above with green iridescence and a white tip when mature. *Female:* Thorax black above with pale stripes and gray to tan sides. Colors of both sexes can become obscured by pruinosity as the spreadwing ages.

Similar Species: Very similar in appearance to the **Southern Spreadwing** and **Sweetflag Spreadwing**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes and marshes, including permanent wetlands and other sites that may dry up during the summer. Larvae vulnerable to predation by fish.



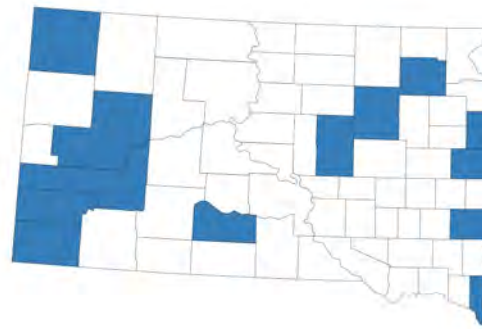


Male Emerald Spreadwing



Female Emerald Spreadwing

Spreadwing Damselflies



Description: Small, stocky spreadwing with bright green upper thorax. *Male:* Thorax metallic green above with narrow pale stripes and white on sides. Abdomen metallic green above with blue-gray tip when mature. *Female:* Duller colored than male. Thorax metallic green above with narrow pale stripes.

Abdomen entirely green above without white coloration in male.

Similar Species: Distinguished from other spreadwing species by the emerald green thorax and abdomen and stocky build.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Temporary shallow ponds and marshes with dense vegetation. Pairs will deposit eggs in live stems of sedges, grasses, horsetails and willow leaves near water.



Female Emerald Spreadwing

Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Sweetflag Spreadwing



Female Sweetflag Spreadwing

Description: *Male:* Eyes blue. Thorax black above and pale below with narrow blue-green stripe. Abdomen metallic green above. Thorax and tip to abdomen becomes gray in mature individuals. *Female:* Colored similar to male.

Similar Species: Difficult to tell apart from the **Northern** and **Southern Spreadwings**. The **Northern** Spreadwing tends to be smaller in size and the **Southern** Spreadwing typically does not develop a completely gray thorax with maturity.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes, bogs or fens with emergent vegetation. Pairs can be observed in the afternoon ovipositing in stems of emergent vegetation.



Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Slender Spreadwing

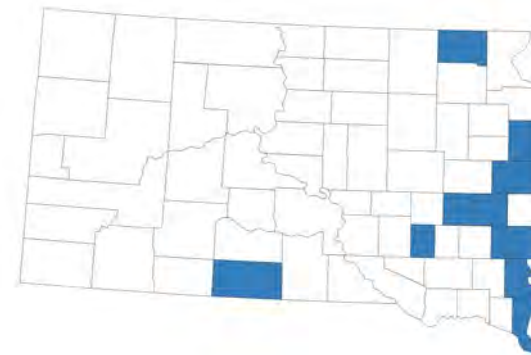


Female Slender Spreadwing

Description: Spreadwing with a long, narrow abdomen that is almost twice as long as the wings. *Male:* Thorax is black in above with wide blue antehumeral stripes and lemon-yellow on sides and undersides. The abdomen is bronze/green above with a blue-gray tip. *Female:* Eyes blue to mostly blue over yellow. Thorax is brown and abdomen is stockier than males.

Similar Species: Distinguished from other spreadwings by the longer body and the pale colored veins near the wingtip in both sexes.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shaded ponds, slow streams and marshes with abundant emergent vegetation. Often associated with woodlands. Males can be found perched in shrubs, low tree branches and dense vegetation near water sources.



Spreadwing Damselflies



Male Lyre-tipped Spreadwing

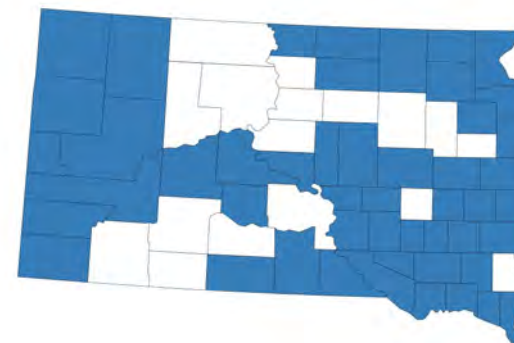


Female Lyre-tipped Spreadwing

Description: *Male:* Eyes bright blue. Thorax metallic brown with pale blue to white sides and narrow blue-green to tan stripes. Abdomen metallic green to brown above and pale below, often becoming pruinose with age. *Female:* Eyes brown or blue. Thorax metallic brown with pale blue-green sides and pale blue-green to yellow stripes. Abdomen metallic brown to green above.

Similar Species: Similar in appearance to the **Northern** and **Sweetflag Spreadwings** both of which in males have S2 turning almost entirely pruinose compared to only appearing on the sides of S2 in the Lyre-tipped.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Marshes, sloughs, and edges to pond and lakes typically in open areas. Often the most common spreadwing found in prairie potholes. Pairs typically oviposit in tandem in vegetation above the water surface.





Male Red Damsel

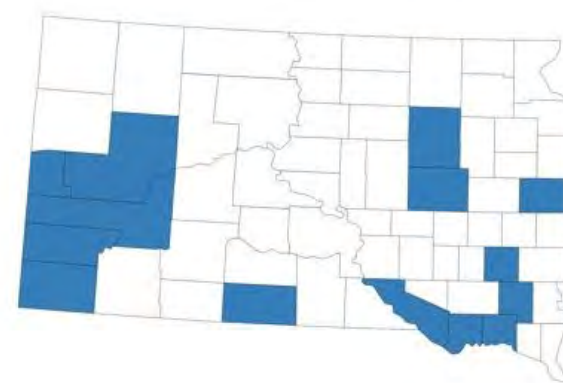


Female Red Damsel

Description: Small, red to reddish brown and black damselfly. *Male:* Thorax can vary from some black on top to entirely black. Eyes and head can be dark brown to black or red. Abdomen mostly red with black on top of S7-10. *Female:* Entire body can be dull brown to orange-brown to red-orange. The abdomen is often more red than the thorax with black marks on top of S8-10.

Similar Species: There are no other red damselflies in South Dakota. Most specimens collected in South Dakota have been identified as the Western red damselfly *Amphiagrion abbreviatum*. However, a larvae collected in 2020 from the upper Big Sioux River in Grant County was identified as the similar appearing Eastern red damselfly *Amphiagrion saucium*. The two species are closely related and it's possible both species and intermediates occur in the state.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Spring-fed marshes and seepages. Typically stays in low, dense vegetation but can be observed flying in open meadows when feeding. Males and females often found together in pairs. More common in the spring.





Male Paiute Dancer By Ryan Jacob

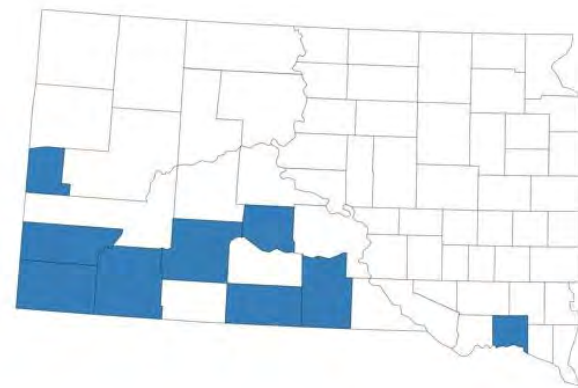


Female Paiute Dancer By Nancy McIntyre

Description: Small blue-and-black damselfly. *Male:* Thorax blue with black median and humeral stripes, black on thorax extends as stripes between the eyes, abdomen with black markings. *Female:* Thorax and abdomen entirely brown or with brown abdomen and light blue thorax and abdominal markings same as male.

Similar Species: Male similar to the blue-ringed dancer and female similar to the Aztec dancer, however, these two species do not occur in South Dakota.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Marshes with sedges especially spring fed, and spring fed sandy creeks. Often associated with hot springs like those found in Fall River County. Common along the edges of emergent aquatic vegetation.



Male image: © Ryan Jacob - some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

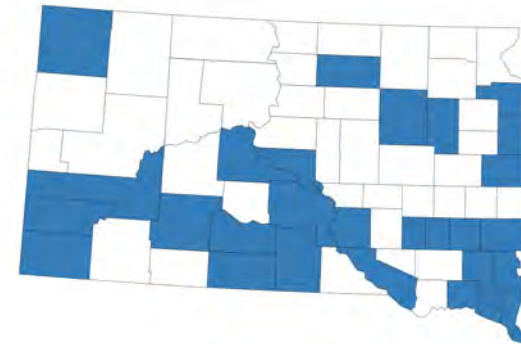
Female image: © Nancy McIntyre - some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

*Male Blue-fronted Dancer**Female Blue-fronted Dancer*

Description: Dancer with limited patterning on a blue thorax. *Male:* Blue face, thorax is blue in front and pale white on sides with a black patch above the middle leg. Abdomen dark above and tan below with pale blue rings on the joints and a blue tip. *Female:* Brown eyes. Abdomen dark above and split by fine pale lines from S2 to S9. Another morph looks similar to male but with brown eyes.

Similar Species: No other male damselfly has an almost entirely blue thorax and blue tip to abdomen.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Large, muddy rivers and streams. Commonly perches on ground and in low vegetation. Lays eggs on floating objects.





Male Emma's Dancer

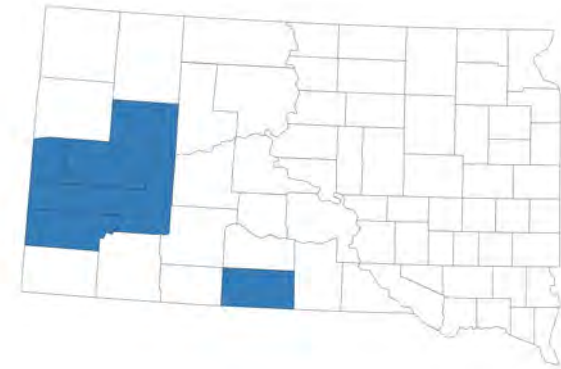


Female Emma's Dancer

Description: Violet colored dancer. *Males:* Eyes violet. Thorax violet with thin black median and humeral lines and whitish underside. Abdomen violet with black rings on S3-S6, S7 black and S8-10 blue with black below. *Female:* Eyes brown. Polymorphic, either being light brown or pale blue-green. Thorax similar patterned to male. Abdomen pale with black blotches at the ends of S3-S6, sometimes also with narrow black stripes along S3-S7.

Similar Species: The **Variable Dancer** is the other violet colored dancer. The Variable Dancer is smaller in size, and the narrow humeral stripe on the thorax splits into a fork.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Small to large streams and rivers with rocky or sandy substrates. Males can be very abundant at breeding habitats. Females are found in nearby uplands and pairs can be observed later in the day in clusters near floating vegetation.





Male Variable Dancer

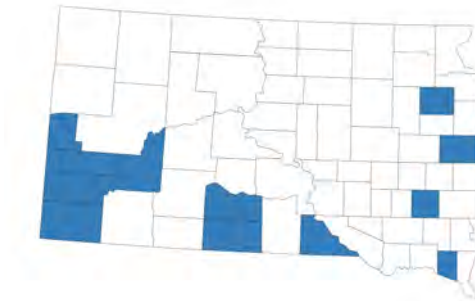
Description: Small, violet dancer with a bicolored purple and blue tip to abdomen. *Male:* Eyes brownish above and violet below. Thorax has narrow black median and humeral stripes that fork at one end, underside white. Abdomen with black markings including rings on S3-6, almost all of S7, and underside of S8-10. *Female:* Eyes brown. Overall body coloration is brown with similar marking on thorax as male. Abdomen with black continuous stripes along the side extending into S9. S8-10 paler in color.

Similar Species: The **Emma's Dancer** is the only other violet colored dancer. The Emma's Dancer is larger, and the stripes on the thorax do not fork.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Wide variety of habitats from ponds to streams in both vegetated and open habitats. Often observed over riffles and vegetation near water, slowly opening and closing wings. Pairs oviposit on plant stems near water surface.



Female Variable Dancer



Pair of Variable Dancers



Male Kiowa Dancer By dnvarga

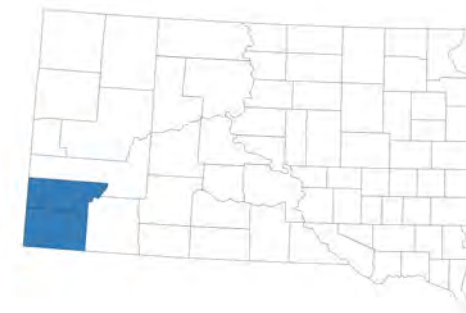


Female Kiowa Dancer By vavogelaar

Description: Pale purple dancer with heavy black markings. *Male:* Head, eyes, thorax, and most of abdomen largely violet. Thorax has a wide black medium stripe and a forked humeral stripe. Antehumeral stripe is pale blue-violet and about the same width as the black medium stripe. Legs are pale colored with dark lengthwise stripes. Abdomen has large black spots on all but S8-10, which have a narrow black stripe low along the sides. *Female:* Similarly patterned as the male but paler in color. Can also occur as a blue morph.

Similar Species: Male can be distinguished from other violet-colored dancers by the large black abdomen marks giving it a heavily spotted appearance. The black markings on the abdomens of the **Springwater, Emma's, and Variable Dancers** is much smaller and less abundant.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Small to medium sized rocky streams, often with riparian vegetation. Commonly observed on vegetation in stream riffles while laying eggs.



Male image: © dnvarga - some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © vsvogelaar - some rights reserved (CC-BY-NC)



Male Sooty Dancer By Nathaniel Schwartz

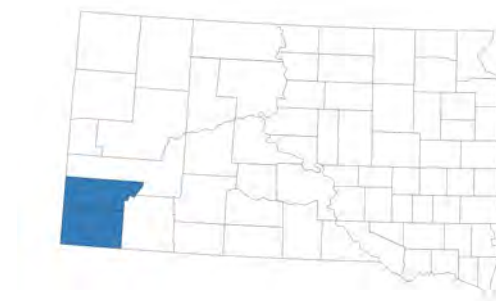


Female Sooty Dancer By Ken-ichi Ueda

Description: Large, dark colored dancer. *Male:* Eyes dark brown to black. Thorax black, sometimes lighter gray below, with no stripes or markings. Abdomen dark brown to black with light brown on sides and narrow rings at base of segments 4-7. *Female:* Eyes brown. Polymorphic, being either entirely brown or with head and thorax blue. Thorax with split stripes on side.

Similar Species: The **Powdered Dancer** is also large and dark bodied before becoming gray with age, but has purple eyes and typically some blue on abdomen tip.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Rocky rivers and streams. Often perches on rocks and sand near water.



Male image: © Nathaniel Schwartz - some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: Ken-ichi Ueda - no rights reserved

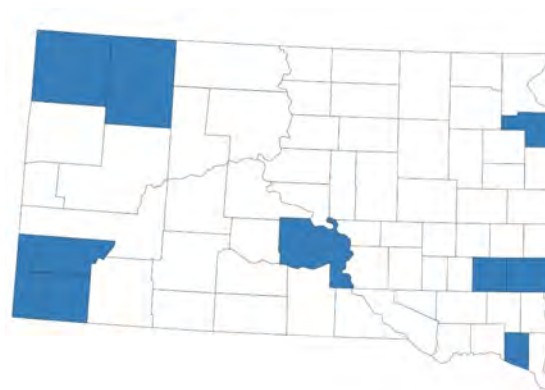
Pond Damselflies



Male Powdered Dancer



Female Powdered Dancer—brown morph



Description: Large, dull dark brown dancer with areas of white pruinosity giving it a “powdered” appearance. *Male:* Chalky white thorax with stripes. Abdomen is mostly black above with white rings at the base of S3-7, S9-10 is pale. *Female:* Poly-morphic, either entirely light brown or mostly blue.

Similar Species: Only male damselfly with heavy white coloration from pruinosity. Females can be distinguished from female **Blue-fronted Dancers** by the lack of a ventrolateral stripe on S9.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams and rivers, often in rocky wooded or open banks. Perches more often than other dancers with wings places alongside abdomen. Males can be abundant in late morning and pairs often aggregate in large numbers.



Female Powdered Dancer—blue morph



Male Springwater Dancer

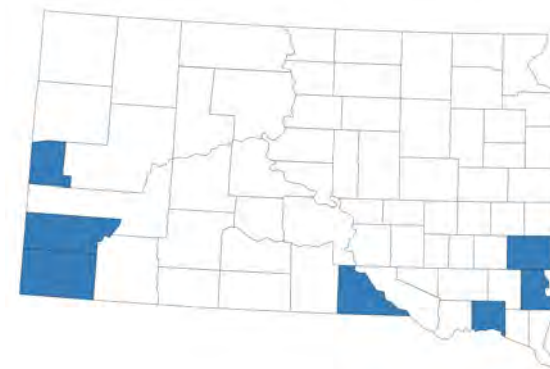


Female Springwater Dancer

Description: *Male:* Blue with black marks on the thorax and abdomen. Black stripe along the side of the abdomen is unforked. Legs are light blue with dark markings on the upper thighs. Segment 2 has 2 small spots that may be connected forming a stripe on the side. Dark spots toward the front of segments 3-6 are tapered. Tip of the abdomen is light blue. *Female:* Pale brown with similar patterns to the male with the exception of the legs which have limited black markings.

Similar Species: The stripe on the side of the abdomen in the **Variable Dancer** is forked and segments 8-10 are black on the undersides. The **Vivid Dancer** has a longer abdomen, with wings typically extending to the end of S7 opposed the Springwater's which extend to the middle or end of S6. The **Kiowa Dancer** has more extensive black basal markings on the mid-abdomen segments.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Springs and small to medium streams with emergent vegetation. Male can be observed perched on rocks or vegetation near water. Most copulation occurs away from water.





Male Vivid Dancer

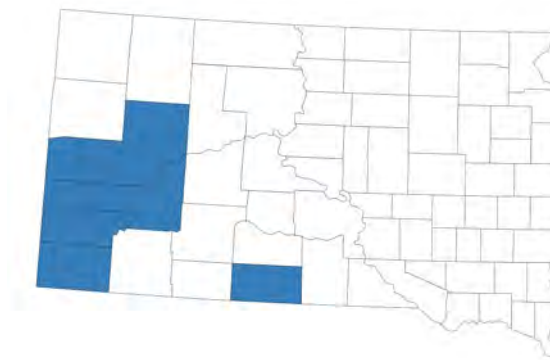


Female Vivid Dancer

Description: Medium sized blue dancer. *Male:* Blue eyes and face, with a dark blue to violet top of head. Large, broadly connected post ocular spots. Thorax blue with unforked black humeral stripe. Abdomen blue, S3-S6 with a black apical ring and teardrop-shaped dorsolateral spot. S7 is almost entirely black and S8-10 is almost entirely blue. *Female:* Polymorphic, can be blue or brown overall in color. Thorax marked similar to male. Tear-drop shaped black spots on S3-S6 of the abdomen turn into stripes towards the rear.

Similar Species: **Emma's and Variable Dancers** are more violet in coloration. The **Springwater Dancer** has a shorter abdomen, with wings typically extending to the end of S6 opposed the Vivid Dancer's which extend to the middle or end of S7.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Small to medium sized streams with current and emergent vegetation. Can be observed perched on rocks or vegetation near streams. At night will roost in shrubs or trees, at times up in the canopy.





Male Prairie Bluet By Scott King

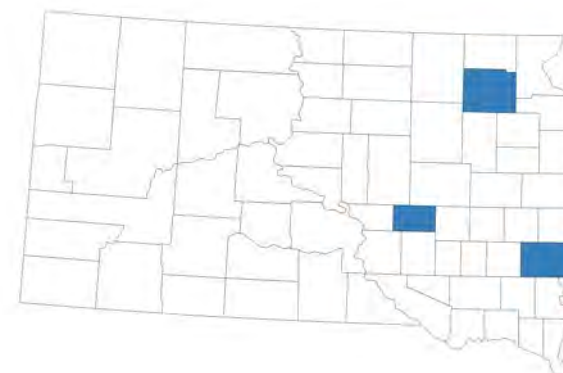


Female Prairie Bluet By James Bailey

Description: Bluet with mostly black body. *Male:* Eyes black over green. Thorax has a wide black median stripe and narrower humeral stripe that is about the same width as the blue antehumeral stripe. Abdomen S1-S2 are mostly blue, S3-S6 are black with blue basal rings, S7 mostly black, S8-S9 blue. *Female:* Polymorphic, being either greenish or blue. Thorax patterned as male. Abdomen completely black above, with pale rings at end of each segment.

Similar Species: Few species of bluets or other damselflies have a mostly black abdomen with blue on S1-S2 and S8-S9. Similar to the **Stream Bluet** which is found in different habitat and has a more slender abdomen. Other similar looking bluet have broader blue rings on the middle abdomen segments.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Prairie ponds, lakes, sloughs and slow moving streams with wetland vegetation. Can be extremely abundant where present. Males are most commonly observed in dense vegetation then over water. Pairs oviposit on submergent vegetation near the water surface.



Male image: © Scott King · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © James Bailey · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Taiga Bluet

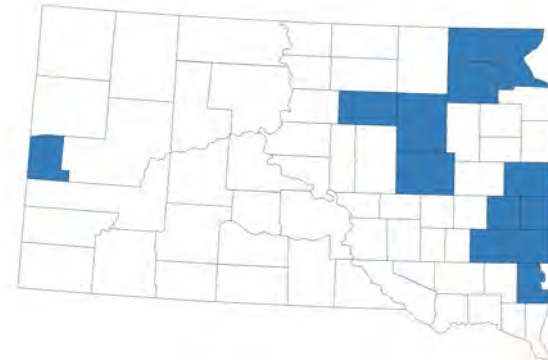


Pair of Taiga Bluets

Description: Bluet with substantial black on abdomen, a U-shaped mark on S2 and a green tint to the lower thorax. *Male:* Eyes black above and blue/green below. Thorax has a wide median stripe, slightly narrower humeral stripe, and a thin antehumeral stripe that sometimes is broken into an exclamation mark. Abdomen is half blue and black on S3-5, almost solid black on S6-7 and blue with back on top on S8-10. *Female:* Polymorphic, either light brown or bright green to blue-green. Thorax is patterned similar to male, abdomen is almost entirely black on the top of S2-10.

Similar Species: Similar in appearance to other bluets, but the combination of the extensive black on abdomen, exclamation mark-shaped antehumeral stripe and U-shaped pattern on S2 separates the males from similar species in its range.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Sedge marshes and vegetated ponds and lakeshores. Often stay within dense vegetation and are rarely seen flying over open water.





Male River Bluet

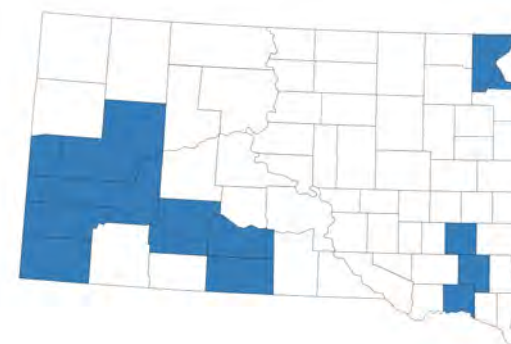


Female River Bluet

Description: Large bluet with long appendages and postocular spots that typically do not connect. *Male:* Eyes are black over blue. Thorax is blue with a wide median and narrow humeral stripes. Legs are blue with a black stripe. Abdomen is blue, S2 with a black subapical spot, S3-6 with narrow spear-shaped stripes, S7 has a complete black stripe dorsally, S8-9 blue, and S10 black dorsally. *Female:* Polymorphic, being brown or blue in color. Eyes are brown over tan. Thorax is patterned similar to male. Abdomen has black above on all segments.

Similar Species: Males look similar to many other bluets. **Arroyo Bluets** are shorter and overall darker in color with black dorsal markings covering a greater area on the abdomen. The black markings on the middle segments of the **Boreal Bluet** are shorter. The postocular spots on the **Northern Bluet** are larger and S10 is entirely black. The postocular spots in the **Tule Bluet** are typically bridged by a line. Females are very difficult to tell apart so size, distribution and presence of male need to be considered.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow streams and rivers, often in open country with riparian borders. Males will perch near the edge of vegetation. Females will oviposit on emergent and floating vegetation.





Male Northern Bluet

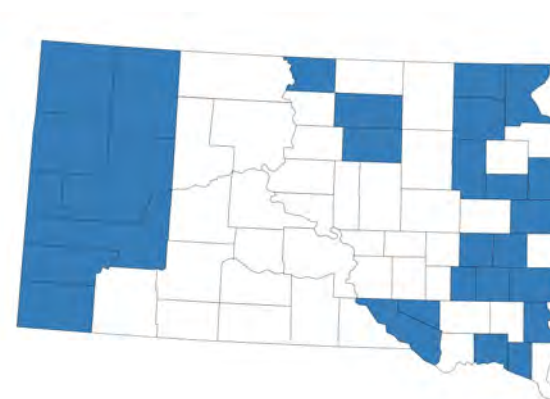


Female Northern Bluet

Description: *Male:* Blue thorax with black shoulder stripes, abdomen with alternating blue and black segments. *Female:* Thorax and abdomen pale blue to olive brown, thorax and abdomen markings like male. Boths sexes have large eyespots.

Similar Species: Species must be examined in-the-hand to separate from **Alkali**, **Boreal** and **Familiar** bluets.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Marshes, ponds, and lakes, slow streams, bogs and fens. Can be very abundant along shorelines. Males often fly over open water, females oviposit on floating vegetation.



Pond Damselflies



Male Rainbow Bluet By smwhite

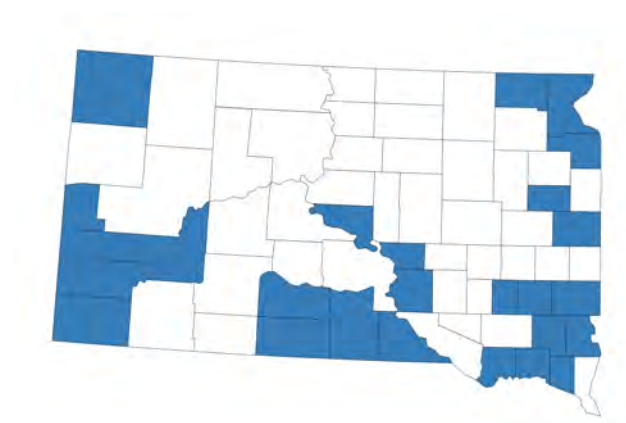


Female Rainbow Bluet By Andrew Keaveney

Description: Unique bluet with orange face, greenish thorax, and blue abdomen. *Male:* Eyes orange, green and yellow, postocular spots blue. Thorax green with wide black stripes. Abdomen black above and bluish green turning to blue toward tip, yellowish legs. *Female:* Eyes brown over yellow. Thorax and sides of abdomen yellow-green.

Similar Species: No other damselfly is colored similar to the male. Female is similar to the **Stream Bluet**, but has a yellower face and less blue on the abdomen tip.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow streams, rivers, and lakes with emergent vegetation. Males perch on shoreline vegetation. Pairs oviposit in grass near the surface of the water.



Male image: © smwhite · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Andrew Keaveney · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Double-striped Bluet

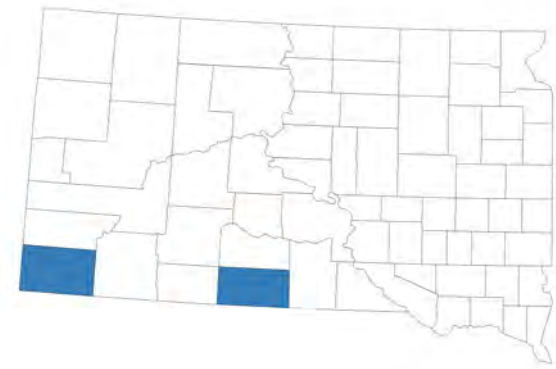


Female Double-striped Bluet

Description: Smallest of the bluets with double stripes on the thorax and postocular spots that form a narrow unbroken line. *Male:* Blue eyes and front of head. Abdomen is mostly bright blue. A black stripe runs the entire top length of segments 2 and 3. Segments 4-7 have black rings that are sharply pointed in front. Segments 9 and 10 are entirely blue. *Female:* Occur in three different color forms of pale blue, green or brown. Thorax with same double stripes as the male. Abdomen with black running along the top of all segments except 9 and 10.

Similar Species: The small size and double striped abdomen make this species unique among all other bluets.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes and slow streams with emergent vegetation. Can be observed swarming along vegetation and flying over open water where it will hover in place.





Male Boreal Bluet

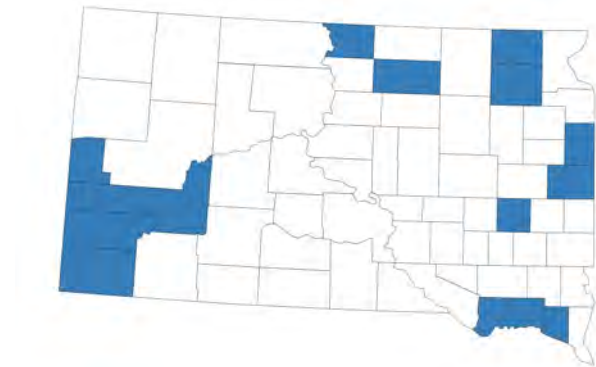


Female Boreal Bluet

Description: Bluet with large blue postocular spots that form a dumb-bell. *Male:* Blue eyes and a black cap. Thorax has a wide median stripe and narrow humeral stripe. Abdomen has black rings, S6-7 mostly black, S8-9 blue, S10 black above and blue below. *Female:* Similar patterned to male but generally duller and colored light blue, green or yellow-green.

Similar Species: Indistinguishable from the **Northern Bluet** in the field. These pair of species are often lumped as “borthern” or “nobo” bluets. Males have more blue on the segments of abdomen than the **Tule Bluet** and **Alkali Bluet**. The **Familiar Bluet** has larger postocular spots. The **Hagen’s Bluet** and **Marsh Bluet** are slightly smaller with smaller postocular spots.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, marshes and lake margins with emergent vegetation. Male will often perch on vegetation in large numbers, making a bluish color to the water surface.





Male Tule Bluet

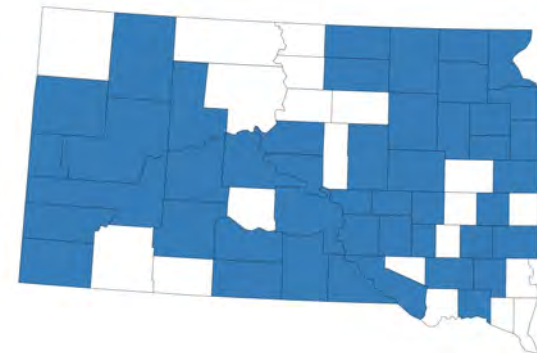


Female Tule Bluet

Description: *Male:* Thorax and abdomen blue with black stripes on thorax and black spots on abdominal segments. *Female:* Can have either brown or blue thorax and abdomen with top of abdomen black.

Similar Species: Males similar to Alkali and River bluets, however examining the amount of color on abdominal segments will distinguish the species. Females difficult to separate from female **Arroyo**, **Familiar**, and **River** bluets without looking at anatomical features in-hand.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, ponds, slow streams and rivers.



A close-up photograph of a damselfly nymph. The nymph is positioned vertically, clinging to a green, hairy stem. Its body is elongated and segmented, with a light brown and white pattern. The wings are transparent and folded along its back. The head is small and dark. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

A map of Oklahoma showing its county boundaries. The counties are colored in a checkerboard pattern of blue and white. The blue counties are: Adair, Alfalfa, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Delaware, Ellis, Garfield, Grant, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Haskell, Harmon, Hotchkiss, Jackson, Johnston, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mayes, McClain, McIntosh, Murray, Nowata, Oklahoma, Osage, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rockwall, Sevier, Stephens, Tulsa, and Woodward. The white counties are: Beaver, Bristow, Choctaw, Cherokee, Chisholm, Choctawhatchee, DeWitt, Dewey, Garvin, Grant, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Haskell, Harmon, Hotchkiss, Jackson, Johnston, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mayes, McClain, McIntosh, Murray, Nowata, Oklahoma, Osage, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rockwall, Sevier, Stephens, Tulsa, and Woodward.



Male Alkali Bluet By Jim Johnson

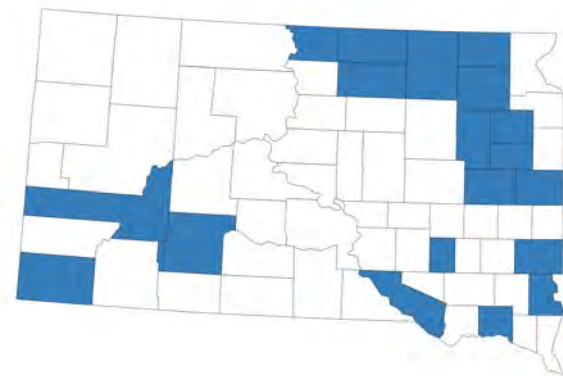


Female Alkali Bluet By Tim Leppek

Description: *Male:* Blue face and black top of head with pale blue occipital bar and postocular spots. Blue thorax with a black humeral stripe that is narrower than the black antehumeral stripe. Abdomen striped with roughly equal amounts of blue and black. *Female:* Similar patterned to male but pale blue or tan in color.

Similar Species: Very similar in appearance to the **Boreal** and **Northern Bluets**. The males of both species have more blue in the abdomen segments than the Alkali Bluet.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds and lakes, primarily those with saline or alkaline water.



Male image: © Jim Johnson · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Tim Leppek · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

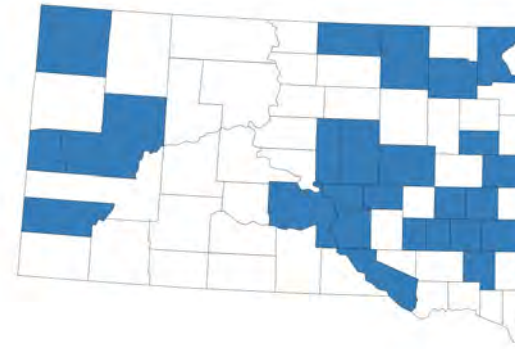
Pond Damselflies



Male Marsh Bluet



Female Marsh Bluet (green morph)



Description: *Male:* Eyes blue with black cap. Large blue postocular spots that connect to form dumbbell. Thorax blue with black stripes. Abdomen blue with black rings on S3-S5 that widen toward rear, most of S6, S7 and S10 black. *Female:* Polymorphic, being either blue of

brownish-green in color. Thorax patterned similar to male. Abdomen entirely black above.

Similar Species: Very similar in appearance to the **Hagen's Bluet**, males can only be distinguished by the shape of the terminal appendage. The **Northern, Boreal, and Familiar Bluets** are colored similar to male but are larger size, and the black spot on S2 of the **Marsh Bluet** typically reaches the end of the segment.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of lakes and ponds with emergent vegetation. Often observed in abundance perched on shoreline or emergent vegetation. Rarely stray to open water.



Female Marsh Bluet (blue morph)



Male Stream Bluet

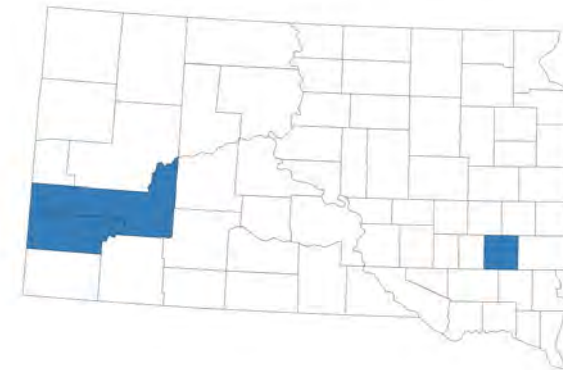


Female Stream Bluet

Description: Bluet with a predominately black abdomen. *Male:* Eyes black above and blue below. Thorax greenish-blue with black stripes on the front and shoulders. Abdomen mostly black with narrow blue rings and a blue tip. *Female:* Polymorphic, being either green or blue. Thorax similar to male but the shoulder stripe may be split by a brown stripe. Abdomen lacks blue rings and has less blue on the tip.

Similar Species: The mostly black abdomen distinguishes the Stream Bluet from other species of bluets.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Medium to large streams and occasionally vegetated lake shores. Males often hover above water for long periods of time. Females and pairs oviposit on beds of submergent vegetation.



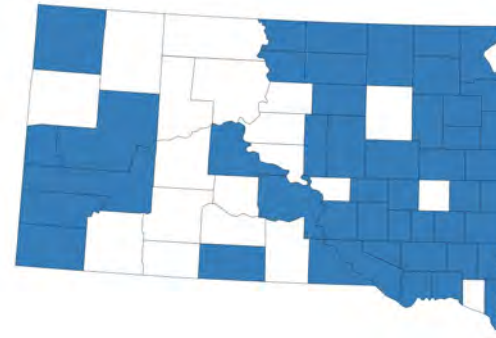
Pond Damselflies



Male Hagen's Bluet



Female Hagen's Bluet



Description: Small bluet with large postocular spots that form a dumbbell shape. *Male:* Blue eyes with a black cap. Blue abdomen with black spot on top of S2, black spots that touch the black rings on S3-S7, and a black spot on the top of S10. *Female:* Can be tan, green or blue in color. Eyes are tan to green with a

brown cap. Abdomen is entirely black above

Similar Species: Very similar in appearance to the **Marsh Bluet**, males can only be distinguished by the shape of the terminal appendage. Other species of Bluets have more black on the midabdomen segments.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Vegetated marshes, ponds, lakeshores and slow moving streams. Females will submerge themselves under vegetation to oviposit while the male remains above the surface. Males can also be observed pulling females from the water



Pair of Hagen's Bluets



Male Arroyo Bluet

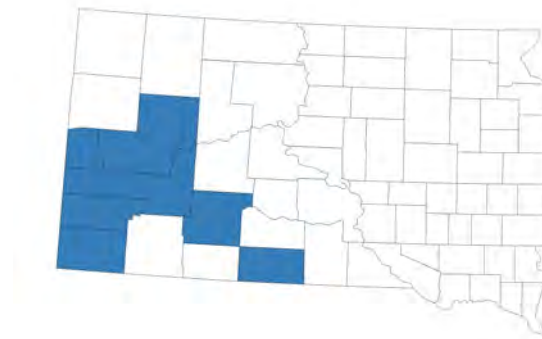


Female Arroyo Bluet By sarinole

Description: Small bluet with heavily black marked abdomen. *Male:* Eyes black over blue. Large blue postocular spots that connect to form dumbbell shape. Thorax blue with black stripes. Abdomen blue with much black, including spear shape pattern on top of S3-6 and all of S7 black above. *Female:* Polymorphic, being either brown or blue. Eyes are brown above and greenish-brown below. Thorax pattern similar to male, abdomen is entirely black above.

Similar Species: The middle segments of the abdomen being mostly black helps to distinguish from most other bluets except the **Tule Bluet** which is slightly larger and typically occurs in different habitats.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams, rivers or lake shorelines with emergent vegetation. Male rarely seen in large numbers, but can be observed in emergent vegetation near shorelines. Females less commonly seen except while in copulation.



Female image: © sarinole · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Orange Bluet

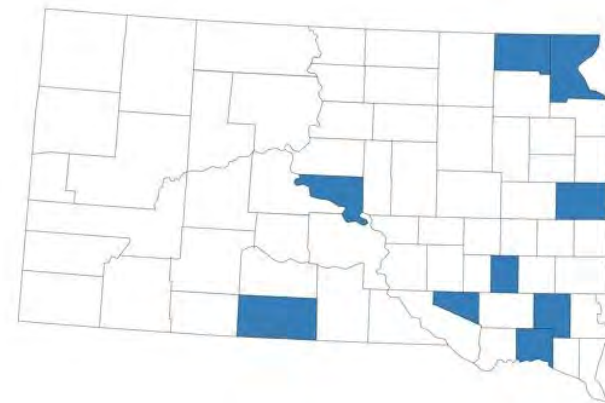


Female Orange Bluet

Description: Slender bluet with postocular spots that form a transverse line. *Males:* Orange thorax with black dorsal and shoulder stripes. Abdomen is mostly black above with orange sides and rings between segments. *Female:* Similar to male but paler in color. Abdomen is black above with a pale tip.

Similar Species: No other damselflies in South Dakota are similarly colored.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Wide variety of habitats including lakes, ponds and slow-moving streams. Can be observed away from water and up in trees. Most common at water later in the day and remain active until dark.





Male Pacific Forktail

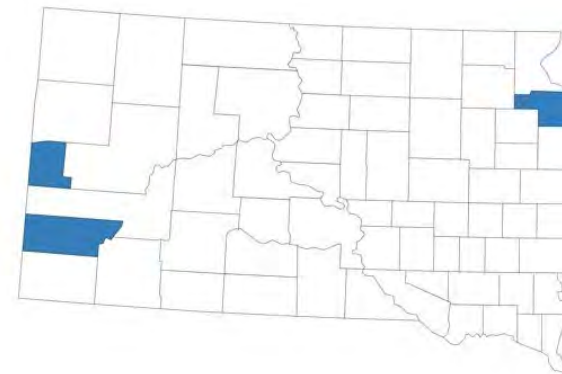


Female Pacific Forktail

Description: Small, slender forktail. *Male:* Eyes black over green, head black with small pale blue postocular spots. Thorax blue on sides and black above with four small blue dots. Abdomen black with blue S8-9 that have black stripes on sides. *Female:* Polymorphic. Andromorph colored similar to male but the blue on the abdomen only covers S8. the other being pale orange to tan in color. Gynomorph comes in a wide variety of colors and patterns, typically being pale orange to tan in color and becoming gray with age.

Similar Species: Only other species with similar pattern to the male with four dots on the thorax is the **Plains Forktail** which is difficult to tell apart. Under a close view, the abdomen tip of the **Pacific** is elevated which does not occur in the **Plains Forktail**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Wide variety of lakes, ponds, marshes or slow moving streams with abundant vegetation. Often observed perched in thick cattails and other dense vegetation. Females often active before males in the morning while ovipositing on floating vegetation.





Male Plains Forktail By Cathy Pasterczyk

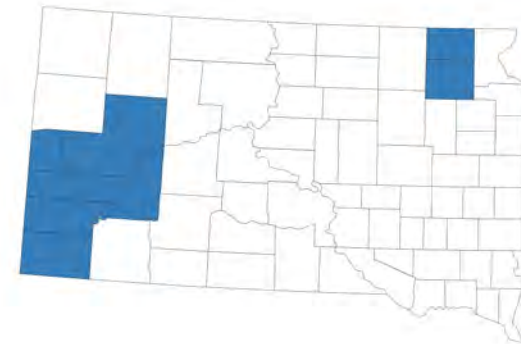


Female Plains Forktail By Nancy McIntyre

Description: Slender, small forktail. *Male:* Eyes are black over green with small blue postocular spots. Thorax is dark above and blue below with the antehumeral stripes reduced to two pale blue spots. Abdomen is nearly all black, S8-9 blue with black stripe on side. *Female:* Polymorphic, being either colored similar to the male or with tan eyes, pale orange head spots and legs, and base of abdomen pinkish-orange become blue.

Similar Species: Only other species with similar pattern to the male with four dots on the thorax is the **Pacific Forktail** which is difficult to tell apart. Under a close view, the abdomen tip of the **Pacific** is elevated which does not occur in the Plains Forktail.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, springs and slow moving streams. Both sexes can be abundant in marshy vegetation at water edge. Often observed holding wings partially opening for a moment after landing before closing them.



Male image: © Cathy Pasterczyk · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Nancy McIntyre · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Western Forktail

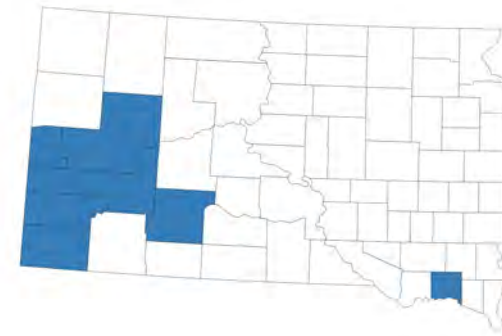


Female Western Forktail By ronlyons

Description: Small forktail with striped thorax and blue-tipped abdomen. *Male:* Green eyes and face with a black cap and bluish-green eyespots. Thorax is blue to green with a black humeral stripe that is three times the width of the black antehumeral stripe. Abdomen is black except S1-3 and S8-9 which is green to blue. S8-9 also have a short, thick black line along sides. *Female:* Head and thorax patterned similar to male but orange in color, becoming olive or gray with age. Eyes are greenish-tan with a brown cap.

Similar Species: **Pacific** and **Plains Forktail**— thorax is blue with four dots on the black front. **Eastern Forktail**— lacks the very small green spots on either side of the protothorax present on the Western Forktail.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving streams, ponds and lakes with heavy vegetation. More commonly observed near streams than most other forktail species. More often found in dense vegetation than over open water. Females usually vastly outnumber males.



Female image: © ronlyons · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Eastern Forktail

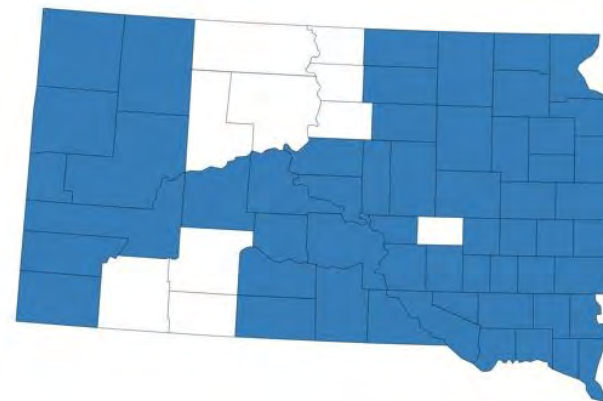


Female Eastern Forktail

Description: Small forktail with black and green striped thorax and blue-tipped abdomen. *Male:* Face and eyes green, postocular spots blue. Thorax bright green with black stripes. Abdomen mostly black with the sides of S1—S2 green, and S8—S9 blue with a short thick black line. *Female:* Primarily orange when young with black thorax stripes and top of abdomen. Mature females become gray with black stripes still visible.

Similar Species: The **Western Forktail** has small green spots on either side of the prothorax. The **Pacific and Plains Forktails** both have four dots on the top of the thorax.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes and slow moving streams. Males perch or cruise through dense vegetation near waters edge looking for females in similar habitat. Females oviposit alone on floating vegetation and will flex their abdomens while rapidly beating their wings to repel intruders. Often one of the first damselflies observed in the spring.





Male Sedge Sprite

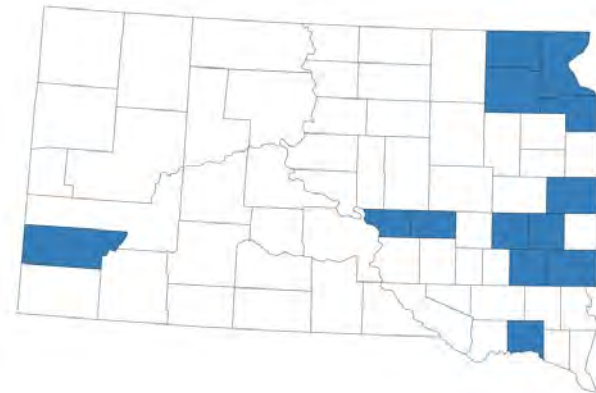


Female Sedge Sprite

Description: Tiny metallic green and blue damselfly without any stripes. *Male:* Blue eyes with a metallic green head. Thorax and abdomen green above and yellowish-green to blue below. Tip of abdomen (S8-S10) blue with black spots. *Female:* Colored similar to male but with less blue on abdomen tip.

Similar Species: The only other damselflies with blue abdomen tips are the Forktails, which all have black instead of green on the thorax and green instead of blue eyes.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Typically found at a variety of non-moving water habitats, including lake and pond shorelines, sedge meadows, bogs and fens. Often associated with thick beds of sedge. Easily overlooked and often more abundant at sites than first apparent.





Male Canada Darner

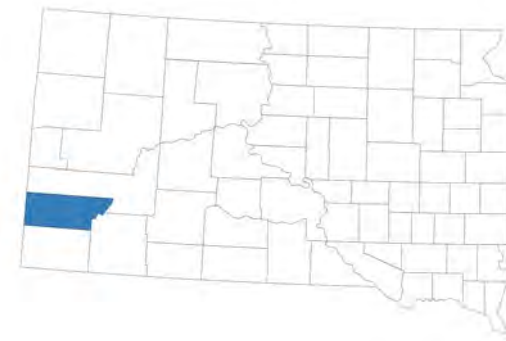


Female Canada Darner

Description: Stripes on side of thorax are notched with a yellow/green spot between them. Pale blue/gray spots under most abdomen segments. *Male:* Thorax side stripes are blue and top stripes are greenish/blue. *Female:* Thorax side stripes can be either all green or mostly blue similar to males.

Similar Species: Can be distinguished from other darners by the deeply notched thorax side stripes and lack of a black line across the face.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes and ponds with abundant emergent vegetation. Often associated with bogs, beaver ponds and wooded areas. Can be observed feeding near wetlands especially at dusk. Male will rapidly fly over open water or along lake shores often with their abdomen drooping towards the tip.





Male Lance-tipped Darner

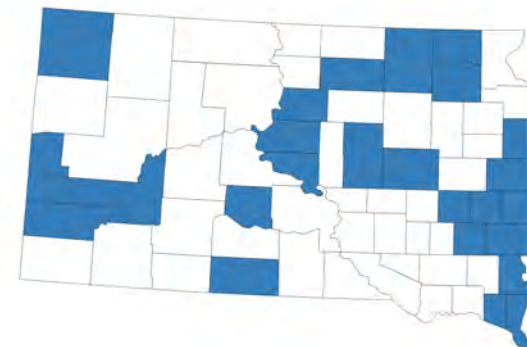


Female Lance-tipped Darner

Description: Robust darner with a reddish brown abdomen. The lateral stripes on the thorax are notched and extended with the second stripe being distinctly broader than the first. *Male:* Stripes on thorax are blue to green. Extensive blue coloring on abdomen with a paddle shaped appendage. *Female:* Abdomen shaped similar to male. Polymorphic, being either dull yellow or bright blue in color.

Similar Species: The shape of the Lance-tipped Darner's anterior lateral stripe on the thorax distinguishes it from the **Paddle-tailed** and **Shadow Darners**. Also lacks the dark line across the face and the pale mark on S1 seen on the **Paddle-tailed Darner**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, slow streams and marshes with emergent vegetation. Males can be observed flying back and forth or hovering along shorelines or over open water. Pairings occur over water then hang in trees near waterside. Females oviposit on floating logs or emergent vegetation.





Male Variable Darner

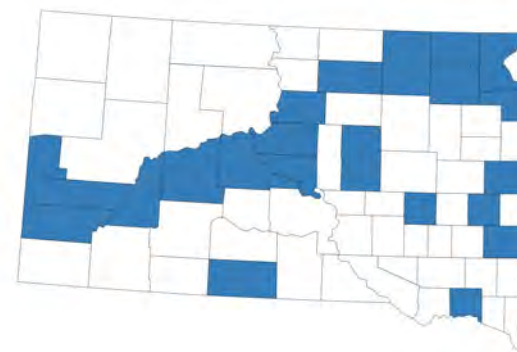


Female Variable Darner

Description: *Male:* Eyes dark blue, face pale green. Thorax dark brown with very narrow stripes or spots yellow to blue in color. Abdomen black with large amount of blue markings, S10 has a white to pale blue spot. *Female:* Polymorphic, having either blue eyes and blue markings on body, or brown eyes with yellow markings on body.

Similar Species: The narrow stripes on the thorax help distinguish both sexes from other darners. The white spots on S10 also help distinguish the male from other species which have blue spots.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of lakes and ponds, typically with thick shoreline vegetation. Males can be observed hovering and flying along shorelines in search of females. Females lay eggs on floating vegetation, shrubs, or wet logs near water. Often perches on vegetation high above the grown, sometimes a distance away from water.





Male Paddle-tailed Darner

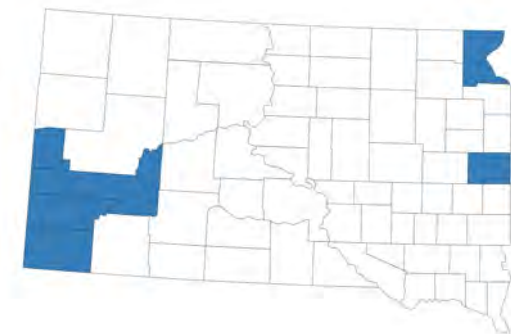


Female Paddle-tailed Darner

Description: *Male:* Eyes bright bluish-green. Face has a fine black line. Thorax dark brown to black with blue to light yellow stripes that are straight. Abdomen black with large blue spots and a paddle-shaped appendage at end. *Female:* Polymorphic. May have brown eyes and yellow stripes and spots or blue eyes with blue stripes and spots.

Similar Species: Long paddle-shaped appendage helps differentiate from many other darners. Similar to the **Shadow Darner**, but has more extensive blue spotting on the abdomen. The **Lance-tipped Darner** is also similar in appearance, but lacks the black line on the face and has a notched stripe on thorax.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes, and slow moving streams typically with thick shoreline vegetation. Male can be observed patrolling shorelines or hovering over open water or in clearings in vegetation. Pairs will couple over water and hang together in trees or shrubs near shoreline. Females oviposit on floating logs or in emergent vegetation.





Male Shadow Darner

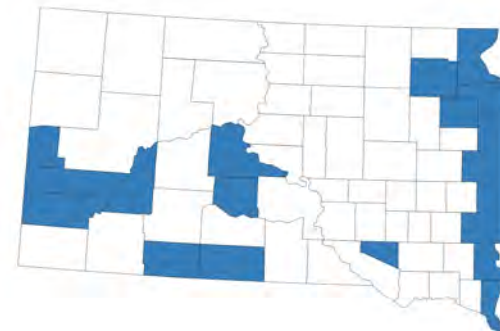


Female Shadow Darner

Description: Darner with narrow, parallel straight stripes on side and front of thorax and small spots on abdomen. *Male:* Turquoise eyes, stripes on thorax are blue-green above and yellow-green below. *Female:* Two color forms; one with brown eyes and yellow markings and another with blue-tinged eyes, greenish-yellow thorax stripes and blue abdominal spots.

Similar Species: The male can be distinguished from the **Lance-tipped Darners** and **Paddle-tailed Darners** by their smaller abdominal spots, black tipped abdomen (S10), and pale spots under abdomen. Both sexes lack the black line on face and pale marking on S10 of the Paddle-tailed.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, ponds, and slow moving stream. Males can be observed flying up and down streams and lake shores, pausing often to hover in place. Both sexes are better observed near water later in the day. Feeds in clearings often along woodland edges or other shaded locations.



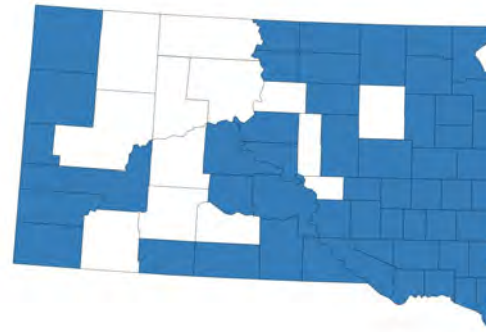


Male Common Green Darner



Female Common Green Darner

Darnier Dragonflies



Description: Has green thorax and black line along the top of the thorax that widens toward the tip. *Male:* Dull green eyes. Face green with blue frons that form a bull's eye pattern. Thorax bright to dull green, abdomen bright blue and darkening towards tip. *Female:* Two color forms. Abdo-

men of most common form is brown above and gray-green on sides. Less common form is colored similar to male with paler blue sides.

Similar Species: Only darnier species with a bright green thorax in South Dakota.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, large ponds and slow streams. Feeds in small swarms in open areas. One of the few North American dragonflies that migrate and is commonly seen in the spring and fall.



Bull's eye pattern on the frons of both male and female Common Green Darner



Male Fawn Darner By Guy Lemelin



Female Fawn Darner By Peter Lane

Description: *Male:* Brown thorax and abdomen with two yellow spots on the sides of the thorax, and brown spots at the base of each wing.
Female: Same as male.

Similar Species: **Ocellated Darner** is similar in appearance but does not occur in South Dakota.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Adults found flying along the banks of small, wooded streams where breeding takes place mainly after dark.



Male image: © Guy Lemelin · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Peter Lane · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male California Darner By Zach Kemp

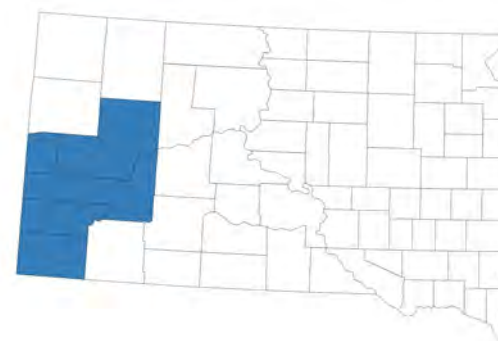


Female California Darner By Jim Johnson

Description: Small darner. Thorax side stripes straight with distinct black borders behind. Upper end of posterior stripe slightly slanted. No stripes on upper thorax. *Male:* Bright blue eyes, and face white to blue. *Female:* Polymorphic, either with light brown eyes, yellow stripes and yellow to white spots, or with tinted blue eyes and blue stripes and spots.

Similar Species: The **Blue-eyed Darner** is larger and has brighter blue stripes on the thorax.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of ponds, lakes and slow moving streams typically in open areas. Males will search for females by flying along shorelines often right at the water surface. Pairs mate in flight and females oviposit in emergent vegetation or floating leaves at water surface. One of the first dragonfly species to appear in the spring.



Male image: © Zach Kemp · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Jim Johnson · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Blue-eyed Darner

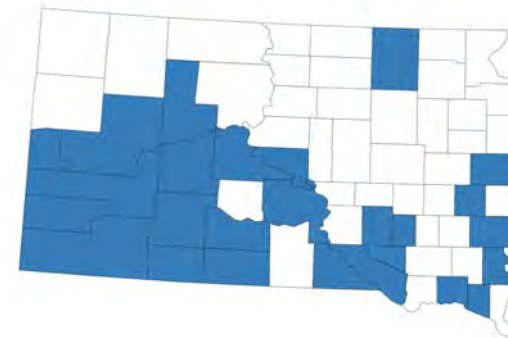


Female Blue-eyed Darner

Description: *Male:* face, eyes and abdominal spots are all bright blue. Thorax with two light blue stripes that are about the same width. Wings are clear. *Female:* Similar patterned to male but with light blue or yellow-green coloration.

Similar Species: The male **Variable Darner** look similar but are not as vibrant blue in color.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow-flowing streams, lakes and ponds in open sunlit areas. Can be observed feeding in large swarms and often found hanging from tree branches and other vegetation.

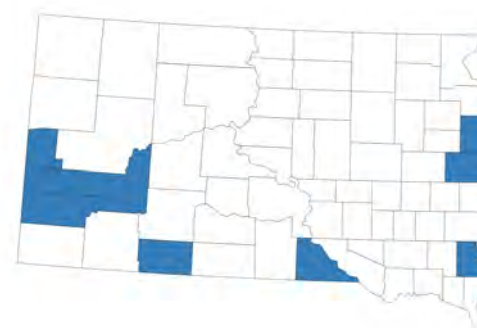




Male Horned Clubtail



Female Horned Clubtail



Description: Stocky gray-green and black clubtail with striped thorax. *Males:* Blue eyes and face pale yellow green. Thorax pale gray or yellow with several black stripes. Abdomen black with pale stripes above that resemble spear points. Claspers are

widely forked and horned-shaped. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male, but has more pale coloring on the side of the abdomen.

Similar Species: Males lack the “club” at the base of the tail seen in other clubtail species. The **Jade Clubtail’s** thorax is less heavily marked.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Muddy lakes, ponds and slow moving streams. Very wary and fast, making it difficult to capture. Males often perch on bare ground near water while females can be found on leaves higher in woodlands.



Close up of the spear point shaped stripes on the abdomen of the Horned Clubtail



Male Jade Clubtail

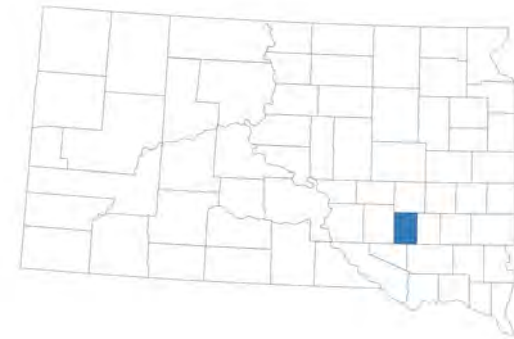


Female Jade Clubtail

Description: Pale green clubtail with rufous brown abdomen tip. *Male:* Eyes and face green. Thorax pale green with dark stripes on side. Abdomen greenish-yellow with dark triangular markings separated by dark rings on segments 2—6, segments 7 and 9 rufous brown. *Female:* Colored similar to male.

Similar Species: The **Russet-tipped Clubtail** also has a brown abdomen tip, but has heavier dark markings on thorax and abdomen.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Muddy ponds, lakes, sloughs and slow moving streams. Rarely ventures far from waters edge. Males typically perch on shore or vegetation near water.





Male Eastern Ringtail By Greg Lasley



Female Eastern Ringtail By Bill Carrell

Description: Yellowish-green ringtail with small patches of color at wing bases. *Male:* Eyes light blue. Face pale green with two thin brown stripes. Thorax light green with well defined dark stripes. Abdomen mostly black with light yellow rings and dorsal stripes on each segment. Tip of abdomen is orange and dark brown. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male but with more yellow on top of abdomen.

Similar Species: Only documented species of ringtail in South Dakota. Color and patterns should distinguish from other dragonfly species.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams and rivers with sandy or rocky substrate. Can be observed perched on ground and in low vegetation, often with abdomen slightly elevated.



Male image: © Greg Lasley · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Bill Carrell · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Plains Clubtail



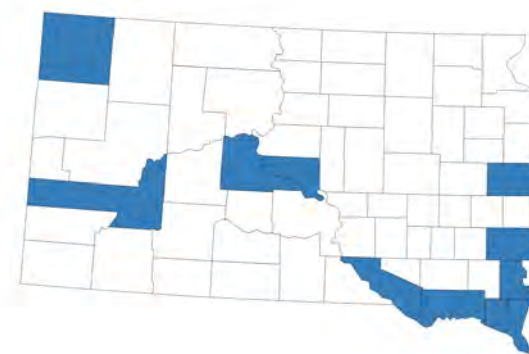
Female Plains Clubtail

Description: Medium-sized black and yellow dragonfly with a moderate sized club. *Male:* Turquoise eyes and yellow face. The top of the thorax behind the head is marked with a pair of parallel yellow stripes. Abdomen is black with interrupted pale yellow lateral and middorsal stripes in the shape of narrow spearpoints. S8 and S9 have complete yellow edges and S10 brown with a yellow dorsal spot. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male.

Similar Species: The abdomen tip of the **Midland Clubtail** is black instead of brown. The **Pronghorn Clubtail** is similar in color pattern but slightly smaller, and the edge of S8 is usually completely yellow where the Plains Clubtail has some dark markings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams and rivers with grassy or wooded banks.

Males can be observed on ground near water, often with an elevated abdomen. Pairs often in low vegetation near water.





Male Midland Clubtail

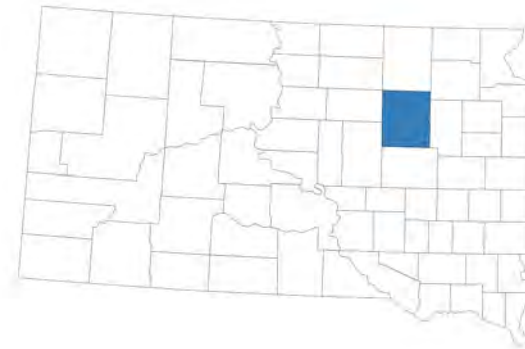


Female Midland Clubtail

Description: Black clubtail with a moderately sized club. *Male:* Greenish blue eyes and yellow face. Thorax pale yellow with black thoracic stripes. Abdomen black with yellow dorsal stripes and yellow edging the clubbed tail. Black legs. *Female:* Colored similar to male. Hind legs may have pale stripes on thighs.

Similar Species: The abdomen tip of the **Plains Clubtail** is brown rather than black. The **Pronghorn Clubtail** has more yellow on top of the abdomen tip.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: River, large streams and lakes with rock and mud substrates. Both sexes can be observed perched on roads and sandy areas. Often feeds on other species of dragonflies.





Male Cobra Clubtail By Gilles Belliveau

Description: *Male:* Distinctive clubtail resembling the hood of a cobra, clubtail is as wide as the thorax, dark body with yellow stripes and spots on the thorax and abdomen, deep green eyes. *Female:* Same as male.

Similar Species: None occurring in South Dakota.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Larger rivers and streams.



Female Cobra Clubtail By Eric Isley



Male image: © Gilles Belliveau · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Eric Isley · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Pronghorn Clubtail By Rich Kostecke

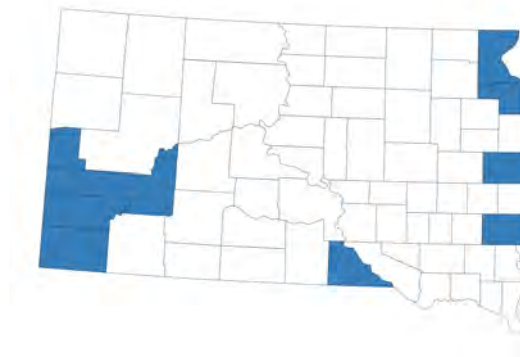


Female Pronghorn Clubtail

Description: Small clubtail with moderately sized club. *Males:* Blue eyes, pale greenish-yellow face. Thorax green with thick black dorsal and lateral stripes. Abdomen dark brown to black with pale yellow dorsal stripe on that appears as interrupted spearhead shape on S1-7, short triangle on S8, wide band on S9, and narrow stripe on S10. Margins of S8-9 yellow. *Female:* Colored similar to male but with more yellow on sides of abdomen.

Similar Species: The **Plains Clubtail** is larger in size and the edge of S8 has dark markings instead of being entirely yellow. The **Midland Clubtail** lacks the yellow markings on the top of the abdomen tip. The **Riverine Clubtail** has much different patterning to the thorax.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving streams and lakes with sandy, muddy or rocky substrate. Individuals can be observed perching on open ground, or low weeds and shrubs. During midday often perched in obelisk shape. Females oviposit along banks by tapping water surface with abdomen. When disturbed, will fly in a looping, dipping and rising pattern over the water.



Male image: © Rich Kostecke · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Riverine Clubtail



Female Riverine Clubtail

Description: Species of “hanging” clubtail; when perched the body hangs downward almost to a vertical. *Male:* Long, slender abdomen with a moderate sized club at end. Eyes are blue-green and face is yellow-green with black markings. Front of thorax has yellow star shaped pattern. Sides of thorax have a pair of wide stripes angling downward. Legs are black with yellow thighs on the hind legs. Yellow spearpoint shaped spots on top of abdomen. *Female:* Similar to male but has a wider abdomen with a complete yellow stripe on the top

Similar Species: The pattern on the front of the thorax helps to differentiate between the similar looking **Elusive** and **Pronghorn Clubtails**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Most likely to observe during emergence and breeding when found near medium to large rivers. During other times of the year the adults are found near the tops of trees.





Male Pale Snaketail By Jim Johnson

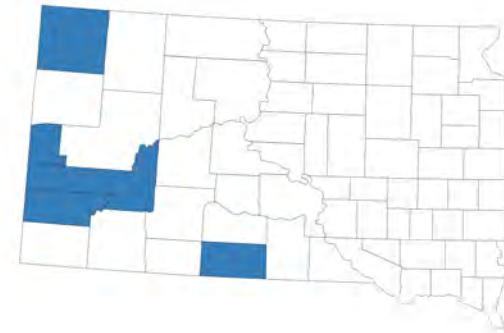


Female Pale Snaketail By Jim Johnson

Description: *Male:* Eyes light blue to gray on a light green face. Thorax light green with a dark brown oval spot in front along with dark thin stripes. Abdomen pale green turning to yellow towards tip with black stripes along sides that join toward the middle of each segment, forming yellow triangles on top. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male but with a white underside to the abdomen.

Similar Species: Only species of snaketail occurring in South Dakota and no other species colored or patterned similarly .

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams or rivers with rocky or sandy substrate. Males often perch facing water with their abdomen slightly elevated.



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Female image: © Jim Johnson · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Brimstone Clubtail By Benjamin Schwartz

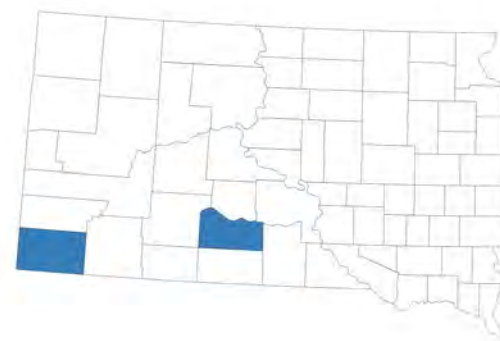


Female Brimstone Clubtail By Ryan Jacob

Description: Small, yellow-green clubtail with blue eyes and a pale face with little dark spotting. *Male:* Thorax with pale green shoulder stripe that becomes paler toward the lower end. Abdomen is yellow-green with dark brown hourglass marking on the sides of S3-S6. *Female:* Similar colored as male but with heavier black markings on S2 and S7.

Similar Species: There are no other yellow-colored small clubtail species in the state. Both the **Pale Snaketail** and **Eastern Ringtail** are larger with a greener thorax.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow-flowing, warm rivers in open areas. Can be observed flying rapidly and low over the water or perched on shrubs, hanging at a 45 degree angles.



Male image: © Benjamin Schwartz · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Ryan Jacob · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

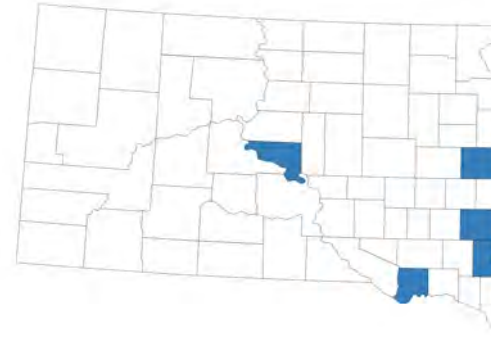
Clubtail Dragonflies



Male Elusive Clubtail



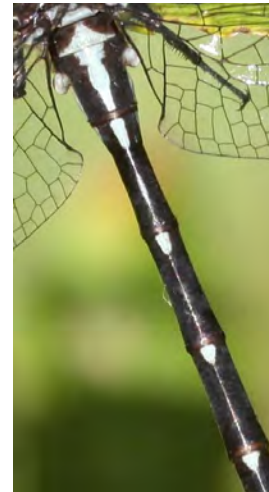
Female Elusive Clubtail



Description: Large, dark clubtail with moderate sized club. *Males:* Blue eyes and pale face. Yellow stripes on upper thorax do not contact with yellow at either end. Abdomen black with pale yellow stripe towards the front (S1-2) and small triangles on the back portion (S3-8). *Female:* Similar color to male with more yellow on the sides of the abdomen.

Similar Species: Differs from the **Russet-tipped Clubtail** by the lack of a reddish colored abdomen, the **Riverine Clubtail** by a different thorax and abdomen pattern, and has a more slender abdomen than the **Midland, Plains** and **Pronghorn Clubtails**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Large, slow-flowing rivers. As the name suggests, this species is hard to find. Adults typically feed in forest canopies. It may be more common in eastern SD than the records indicate.





Male Russet-tipped Clubtail



Female Russet-tipped Clubtail

Description: Clubtail with well defined reddish club and wide stripes on thorax. *Male:* Eyes bright blue to green. Thorax with black and greenish well separated stripes. Abdomen black with yellowish sides, pale spearpoint shapes above, and reddish orange tip with black margins. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male but abdomen is less conspicuously marked.

Similar Species: The club is narrower than the **Midland, Plains,** and **Pronghorn Clubtails**. The reddish tip to club also helps distinguish from all other species.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving river, streams and lakes with shoreline vegetation. Often observed in trees where males will perch hanging vertically. Females are more elusive and difficult to see.





Male Swift River Cruiser

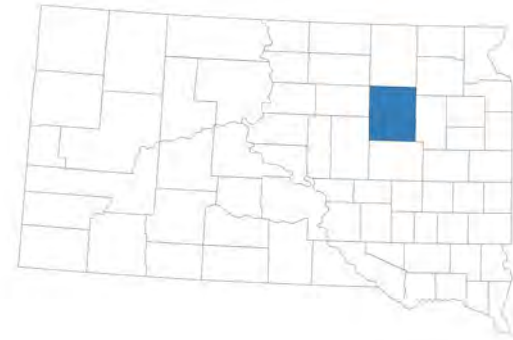


Female Swift River Cruiser

Description: Large, metallic black and yellow dragonfly. *Male:* Eyes bright green. Face black with yellow spots. Thorax metallic greenish black with a yellow stripe on front and side. Abdomen metallic black with a yellow ring on S2, yellow triangles on S3-S6 and yellow spots on top of S7-S8. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male but more brown in thorax.

Similar Species: Only species of cruiser in South Dakota. Unique patterns should distinguish from other dragonfly species.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Large streams and rivers, occasionally lakes with wave action. Both sexes may be observed cruising over clearings or hanging on bare limbs of trees or shrubs.



Emerald Dragonflies



Male Racket-tailed Emerald By Joe Bartok



Female Racket-tailed Emerald By Denis Doucet

Description: *Male:* Small dragonfly with a club tail, thorax metallic green or bronze, abdomen black, bright green eyes. *Female:* Same as male.

Similar Species: None

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes and ponds, slow streams, often found in bogs where South Dakota records occurred.



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Female image: © Denis Doucet · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Common Baskettail

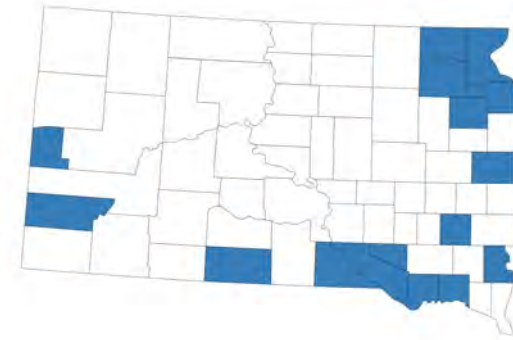


Female Common Baskettail

Description: Dark brown to black baskettail with a hairy thorax and black marks on base of hindwings. *Male:* Eyes red over gray eventually becoming green, face dull yellow. Thorax brown with darker markings and small yellow spots on sides. Abdomen dark brown with elongated yellow spots on sides. Abdomen broad and flattened towards the middle segments. *Female:* Colored similar to male with a thicker abdomen.

Similar Species: The **Spiny Baskettail** is slightly larger and lacks the dark spots on the hindwings. The **Dot-winged Baskettail** has spots on the leading edge of the wing.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Wide variety of habitats including ponds, lakes, stream and rivers with submergent and emergent vegetation. Male can be observed hovering and patrolling shorelines at knee height. Adults can be observed away from water in forest clearings and near roads. Pairs will mate in flight. Feeding takes place singularly or in large swarms in open areas.





Male Dot-winged Baskettail By Eric Isley

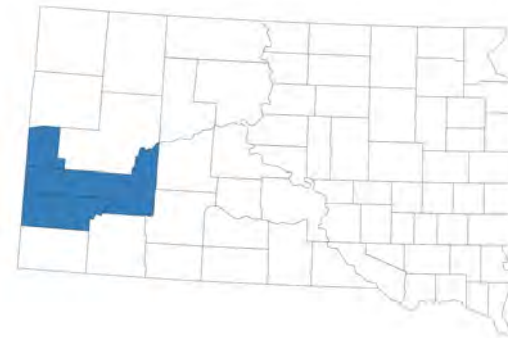


Female Dot-winged Baskettail By Sam Kieschnick

Description: Slender baskettail with dotted wings. *Male:* Eyes either red over gray or gray-green. Face pale yellow with black spots. Thorax brown with dark markings and small dull yellow spots on sides. Abdomen brown near base changing to black near tip with elongated yellow spots. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male but with a thicker abdomen.

Similar Species: Presence of small dots on leading edge of wings distinguish this species from all other baskettails and dragonflies.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, ponds, and slow moving streams. Often observed along forest clearings or in open woodlands. Behavior not well known.



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Female image: © Sam Kieschnick · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Emerald Dragonflies



Male Prince Baskettail

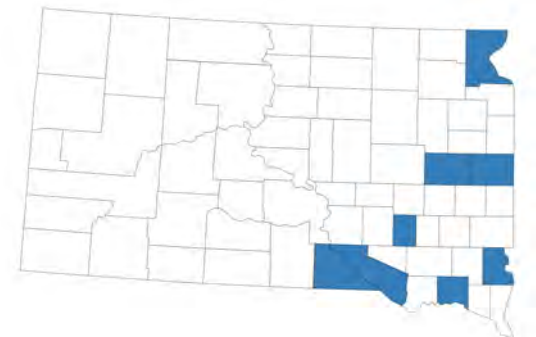


Female Prince Baskettail

Description: Large dragonfly with emerald eyes and large dark spots on wings. *Male:* Eyes emerald green as adults, brown when young. Face light brown. Thorax brown with dark markings and small yellow spots on sides. Abdomen brown with a row of pale spots on each side, darker above, and a thin white ring bordering each segment. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male but eyes are red over gray and the abdomen is slightly thicker.

Similar Species: Only species of baskettail with brown wingtips. The **Common Whitetail** and **Twelve-spotted Skimmer** have similar wing patterns but the Prince Baskettail has a much narrower abdomen.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving streams, rivers, ponds and lakes. Males patrol long reaches of shorelines, chasing away other dragonflies. Often perch in trees hanging vertically, occasionally with abdomen curved upward. Females oviposit on floating leaves or other debris at the water surface.





Male Spiny Baskettail

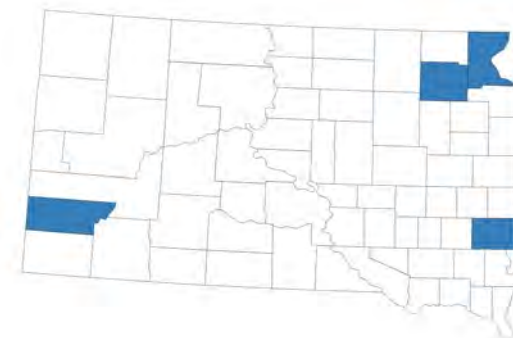


Female Spiny Baskettail

Description: Slender species of baskettail with dark body and no wing markings. *Male:* Eyes dark emerald green. Face light yellow with back spot on top of frons. Thorax brown with dark markings and yellow markings along the sides. Abdomen is constricted just below the base and is brown changing to black toward the tip. Elongated yellow spots along the sides of S3-S8. *Female:* Colored similar to male but eyes are duller green.

Similar Species: **Common Baskettail** is slightly smaller and has dark spots on the base of the hindwings. The **Dot-winged Baskettail** typically has spots along the leading edge of both wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes, and slow moving streams. Males conduct patrol flights over clearing near water. Females typically fly near dusk with raised abdomens, tapping the water surface to release strings of eggs.



Emerald Dragonflies



Male Plains Emerald By Cameron Eckert

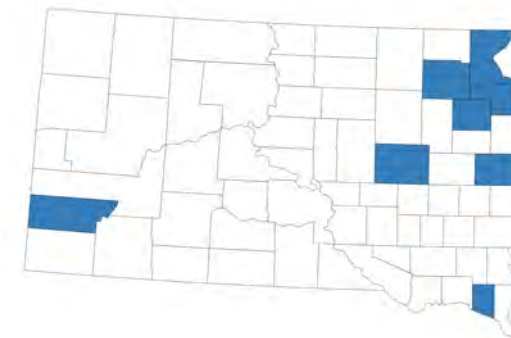


Female Plains Emerald By Peter Taylor

Description: Medium-sized emerald with bright yellow spots. *Male:* Face yellow. Thorax greenish-brown with yellow spots on side. Abdomen black with yellow spots on side of S2 and S3. *Female:* Colored similar to male but with a duller face.

Similar Species: The **Oscillated Emerald** also has yellow markings but is smaller in size.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams and small rivers, typically with riparian vegetation. Both sexes can be observed perched in vegetation near water. Males are territorial and can be observed patrolling along streams. Females oviposit in banks or gravel beds near water.



Male image: © Cameron Eckert · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Female image: © Peter Taylor · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Ocellated Emerald



Female Ocellated Emerald

Description: Small dark browned stripe emerald. *Male:* Face brown with brilliant metallic green eyes. Thorax brown with metallic green sheen and two pale yellow spots on side. Abdomen black with yellow spots on the side of S2 and base of S3. *Female:* Colored similar to male.

Similar Species: Similar pattern to the Plains Emerald but considerably smaller

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Streams with pools in woodlands and in the open. Males patrol along or hover above streams for long periods. Often perch on grasses, sedges and rocks near streams. Can be secretive and therefore difficult to observe.





Male Smoky Shadowdragon



Female Smoky Shadowdragon By Jennifer Linde

Description: Light brown dragonfly with prominent wing dots. *Male:* Eyes, thorax and abdomen all light brown. Thorax darker in front with long yellow spots on the sides. Abdomen has yellow spot on sides of S2 and yellow rings on S3-8. *Female:* Colored and patterned similar to male.

Similar Species: No other species is solid light brown in color including the eyes.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Rivers with vegetated banks and sandy shorelines. Roosts in trees and shrubs in wooded areas and will appear near riversides at dusk. Females oviposit on the water surface by rapidly tapping the surface.



Female image: © Jennifer Linde · some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Pale-faced Clubskimmer By Jennifer Linde



Female Pale-faced Clubskimmer By Jennifer Linde

Description: Large skimmer with a slightly club abdomen with white spots near tip. *Male:* Eyes are light blue, face is tan. Thorax is striped blue-gray and dark brown. Abdomen is black with pale spots and streaks above with a large pair of semicircular spots that almost touch on S7. Wings are clear. *Female:* Eyes light brown to gray, face is light brown. Colored and patterned similar to male but with a less evident club to abdomen. Wingtips may be amber in color.

Similar Species: Only documented species of clubskimmer in South Dakota. The unique coloration and patterns distinguish it from all other dragonfly species.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Rocky shallow streams. Males fly low and often rapidly up and down streams. Females oviposit on water surface while flying over rapidly and striking the water. Individuals often perch by hanging from vegetation in shady areas.



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Female image: © Jennifer Linde -- some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)



Male Calico Pennant

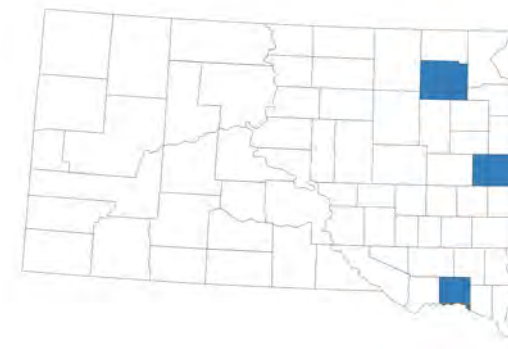


Female Calico Pennant

Description: Small dragonfly with brown-spotted wings. *Male:* Eyes and face dark red. Thorax black and dark red. Abdomen black with red heart-shaped spots above. Wings spotted, with large basal patch on hindwing. *Female:* Eyes red and pale green. Face pale yellow. Thorax brown and black striped with a yellow stripe on sides. Abdomen black with large yellow spots above.

Similar Species: Wing and body pattern make it unmistakable from other species. Most closely resembles the **Halloween Pennant** which has more markings on the wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Marshes, ponds and lakes with shoreline vegetation. Can be observed in groups feeding in open areas near water. Copulation often occurs away from water, then female lays eggs alone or as pair near water surface.





Male Halloween Pennant

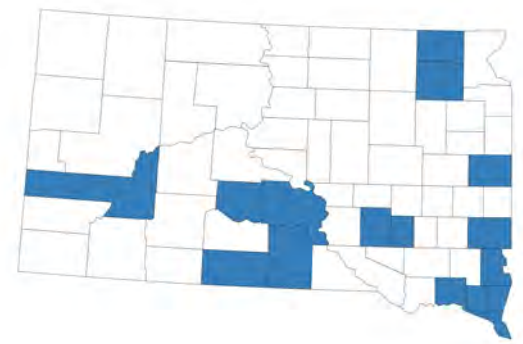


Female Halloween Pennant

Description: Medium-sized skimmer with striking dark-spotted wings.
Male: Eyes reddish-brown, face orange-brown. Thorax orange-brown with black stripes on the sides below the wings. Abdomen is orange-brown at base changing to black toward tip with orange spots forming a stripe along the top. Wings gold with dark spots. **Female:** Eyes red over gray, face dull yellow-orange. Thorax brown in front and pale yellow on sides with stripes similar to male. Abdomen pale yellow below and black above with a yellow stripe. Wings patterned similar to male.

Similar Species: The wing pattern makes it unmistakable with other species. Most closely resembles the **Calico Pennant** which is less marked on the wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Open lakes and marshes with some emergent vegetation. Males perch on tip of vegetation over water and chase one another from territories. Females oviposit in open water or in floating vegetation. Their flight pattern is fluttery, resembling a butterfly.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Eastern Pondhawk



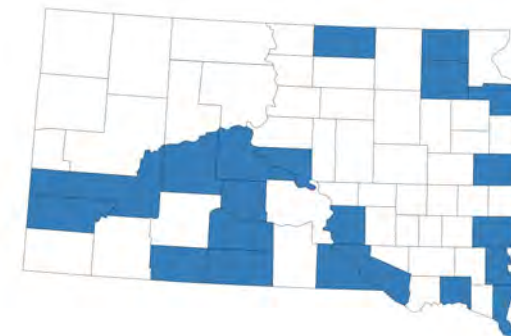
Female Eastern Pondhawk

Description: Medium-sized blue-green skimmer with clear wings.

Male: Eyes pale blue-green, face green. Thorax and abdomen bright green when immature, becoming pruinose blue with age. **Female:** Eyes yellow-brown to bright green, face green. Thorax and abdomen bright green. Abdomen banded black and green or black and white.

Similar Species: Male **Blue Dasher** may be confused with a pruinose adult male, but has a white face and bright green eyes. Immature male may be confused with male **Common Green Darner**, but this species has a black stripe on top of abdomen.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Slow moving streams, and rivers, ponds and lakes typically with emergent vegetation. Perches on the ground, logs or other flat objects. Males aggressively defend territories from one another and are often observed around plants near the water surface. Females typically oviposit on water surface without males later in the day.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Hudsonian Whiteface



Female Hudsonian Whiteface

Description: Small white-face dragonfly with a heavily spotted abdomen. *Male:* eyes dark brown and face white. Thorax red with black triangles above and black markings on sides. Abdomen mostly black with red spots on the top of S4-S7. *Female:* Polymorphic. Can be colored similarly to male or with bright yellow on the abdomen.

Similar Species: The red spots on the male distinguishes it from the **Dot-tailed Whiteface**. The yellow morph of the female has more extensive yellow patterning on the thorax and abdomen than the female **Dot-tailed Whiteface**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Marshes, sedge meadows, and ponds with dense vegetation. Males perch on vegetation to defend territories. Female often perch on the ground aware from water. Females oviposit in patches of sedge.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Dot-tailed Whiteface

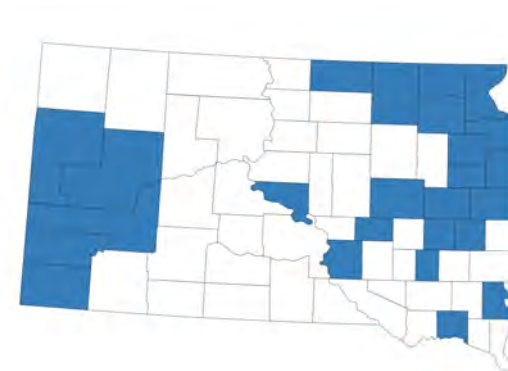


Female Dot-tailed Whiteface

Description: Small, black dragonfly with a white face and yellow spotted abdomen. *Male:* Eyes brown, face white. Thorax black and unmarked. Abdomen black with a single yellow dot on S7. *Female:* Eyes and face similar to male. Thorax dark brown with darker spots in the sides. Abdomen black with yellow base, yellow sides of S3-S4, and yellow spots on top of S3-S7.

Similar Species: **Hudsonian Whiteface** and **Black Meadowhawk** are the only other species of all-black dragonfly, but both lack the yellow spots to the abdomen.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes and ponds in the open with emergent vegetation. Males can be seen perched in a obelisk position on emergent vegetation during midday. Females typically oviposit on water surface or over mats of submergent vegetation





Male Eight-spotted Skimmer

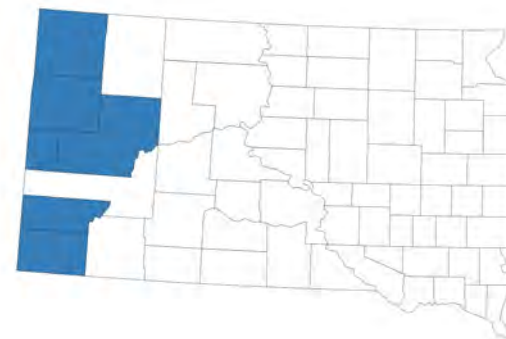


Female Eight-spotted Skimmer By Jim Johnson

Description: Large skimmer with white and black spotting on wings. *Male:* Eyes and face dark brown to black. Thorax dark brown with long yellow spots on sides, and grayish colored front. Abdomen becomes entirely white with age. Each wing with two large black spots and two white spots that develop with age. *Female:* Face and thorax colored as male. Abdomen dark brown to black with yellow spots running along sides that almost form a line. Some females may develop white on abdomen with age. Wings on some females develop white spots as male while others do not.

Similar Species: The **Twelve-spotted Skimmer** has an additional black spot to the tip of each wing.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of ponds and lakes typically with shoreline vegetation. Males perch on vegetation near shoreline and are very territorial and aggressive toward other species. Can be observed perching in vegetation a distance from water. Often observed flying along with the similar Twelve-spotted Skimmer.



Female image: © Jim Johnson—some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Widow Skimmer

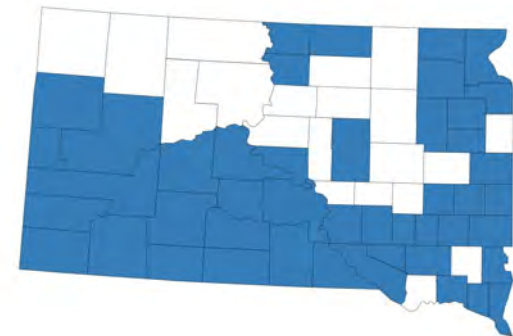


Female Widow Skimmer

Description: Large skimmer with dark wing bases. *Male:* Thorax dark brown with white above. Abdomen entirely white above. Dark wing base outlined in white. *Female:* Thorax brown with large tan spots on sides. Abdomen has a black central stripe bordered by yellow stripes on each side.

Similar Species: No other skimmer has large dark patches near wing base. The patches on the **Black Saddlebags** are only on the hindwing. The **Eight-spotted** and **Twelve-spotted Skimmers** also have black and white wings but with a very different pattern.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Vegetated lakes, ponds and stream pools in open and wooded habitats. Both sexes can be observed in meadows away from water where they perch on flowers and shrubs. Males may hover during patrol flights while flipping their abdomen up and down.





Male Twelve-spotted Skimmer

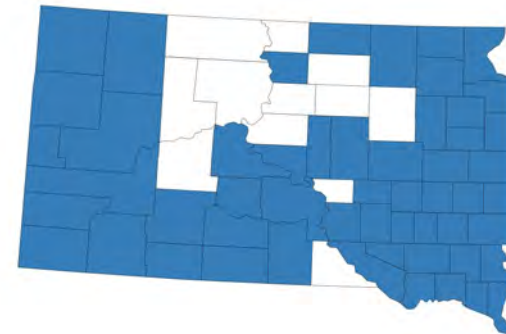


Female Twelve-spotted Skimmer

Description: Large, distinctive skimmer with three large black spots on each wing. *Male:* Eyes and face brown. Thorax brown with two gray and bright yellow stripes on each side. Abdomen similar patterned as female in juveniles, turning to gray with age. Each wing has three dark spots alternating with two white spots. *Female:* Stipes on thorax are all yellow. Abdomen brown with solid yellow stripes down each side. Wings lack the white spots of the male.

Similar Species: Can be distinguished from all other skimmers by the presence of three large dark spots on each wing.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes and slow moving streams with emergent vegetation and exposed sunlight. Males patrol shorelines by flying back and forth or hovering and aggressively chase off other dragonflies. Females oviposit at water surface, in floating logs or other aquatic vegetation.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Four-spotted Skimmer



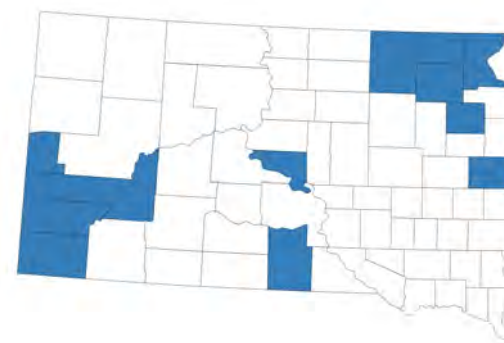
Female Four-spotted Skimmer

Description: Yellow and brown skipper with small spots on wings.

Male: Eyes brown above green, face tan. Thorax brown in front and yellow below with thin black lines. Abdomen orange-brown turning to black toward the end with yellow stripe along the sides. Wings have a moderate sized black spot at the base of the hindwing, and tiny black spots at the nodus of each wing. **Female:** Colored and patterned similar to male.

Similar Species: No other species of brown skimmer with small wing spots at the nodus and base of hind wing.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, ponds, and bogs with muddy substrate and emergent vegetation. Males perch near water either on the ground or on vegetation, sometime pointing abdomen downward. Very territorial and aggressive, feeding on smaller dragonflies.





Male Flame Skimmer By Brent Franklin

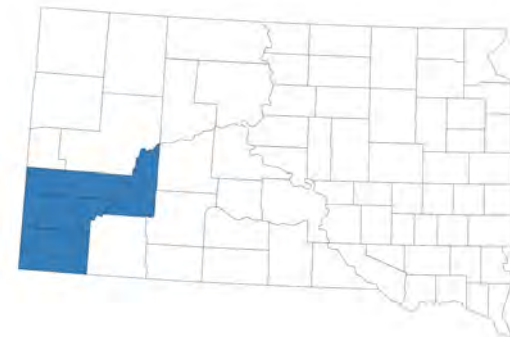


Female Flame Skimmer By Zach Kemp

Description: Large, bright orange skimmer. *Male:* Eyes and face red-orange. Thorax orange with thin white line running up side to wing bases. Abdomen orange and unmarked. Wing bases and veins orange-brown. *Female:* Eyes and face brown. Thorax and abdomen light brown and marked similar to male.

Similar Species: No other species in South Dakota with bright orange coloration to entire body and wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes and slow moving streams. May also be found in forest openings or grassy areas far from water. Males perch near water and search shorelines looking for mates and defending their territories. Females lay eggs by tossing water along with eggs onto shorelines.



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Female image: © Zach Kemp - some rights reserved (CC BY-NC)

Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Blue Dasher

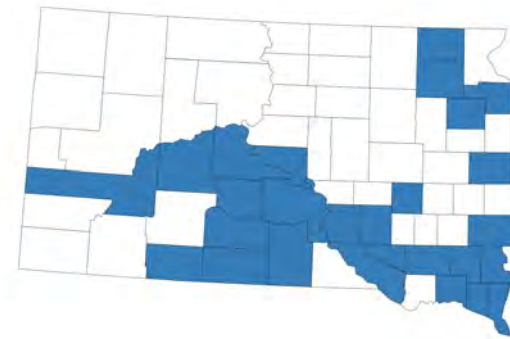


Female Blue Dasher

Description: Skimmer that is highly variable in size with a white and metallic blue face. *Male:* Eyes are blue or green. Thorax is brown in front with narrow yellow stripes that don't extend to the top. The sides of the thorax are pale green to yellow with three full-length brown stripes. Abdomen is black with a pair of yellow dashes above. As males mature the abdomen becomes blue-gray in color. *Female:* Eyes are red or green over gray. Thorax and abdomen are striped similar to the male. Also becomes blue-gray in color with age but more slowly than in males.

Similar Species: **Eastern Pondhawk** (male) — Lacks any stripes on body. **Black Meadowhawk** (female) — Face is tan and lacks any metallic blue. Thorax has a more complex pattern of stripes.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, ponds, marshes and slow moving streams. Can be observed perching at all heights, but most commonly up in trees with wings drooped forward. Males establish and aggressively defend breeding territories along shorelines.





Male Wandering Glider

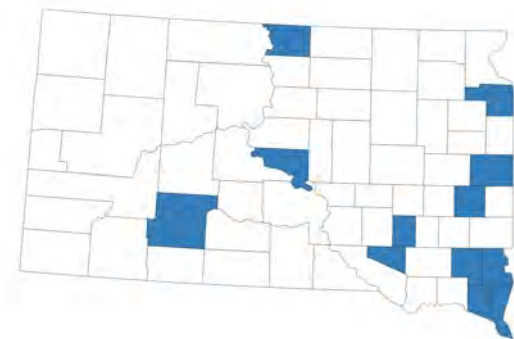


Female Wandering Glider

Description: Yellow-orange skimmer with broad hind wings. *Male:* Eyes red, face orange. Thorax yellow-orange and unmarked. Abdomen yellow with darker orange line above turning into black spots on S8-10. *Female:* Similar to male but paler in color.

Similar Species: Few other species with overall yellow appearance in flight. The **Spot-winged Glider** is darker in color and has spots in the base of the hindwings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of habitats including wetlands, drainage ditches, ponds and open areas. Perches in shaded areas in bushes or trees while hanging vertically. Conducts patrol flights for long periods of time in open areas, often over or near water. Mating occurs in flight, and pairs or individual females will lay eggs by tapping the water surface. Can be observed far from water feeding alone or in large groups.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Spot-winged Glider By Arman Moreno

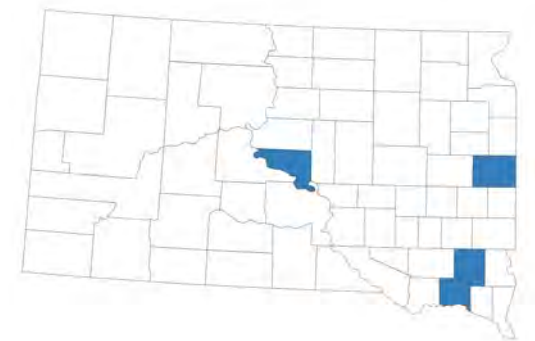


Female Spot-winged Glider

Description: Brownish-red skimmer with a prominent dark spot at the base of each hindwing. *Male:* Eyes gray, face dull red. Thorax brown with two gray stripes down the sides. Abdomen brown with a fine pattern of lines on sutures. Dark spot on hindwing often blends with abdomen. *Female:* Similar colored and patterned as the male but the face is lighter red.

Similar Species: The **Wandering Glider** is light yellow-orange colored and lacks the spots on the hindwing.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Temporary shallow, open wetland. Typically perches in trees and can be flushed from the edge of woodlands. Very rapid and erratic flight. Swarms can be observed flying from knee to head height.



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Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Eastern Amberwing

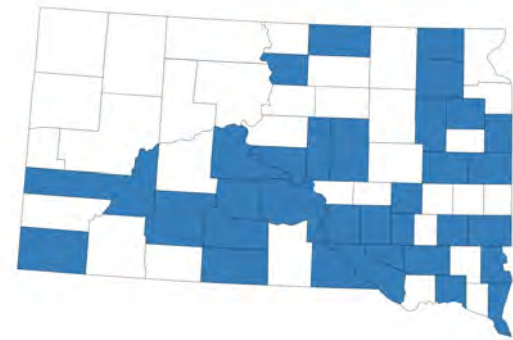


Female Eastern Amberwing

Description: Small, colorful skimmer with a brown thorax and orange wings and legs. *Male:* Eyes reddish brown above and green below. Thorax has two yellowish stripes on the sides. Abdomen is orange with brown to black streaks above. Wings are orange to amber in color, usually with brown spots. *Female:* Body is colored and patterned similar to male. Wings are clear with variously shaped brown stripes or spots with in amber patches.

Similar Species: Other species of skimmers with amber in the wings are much larger in size.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of sloughs, ponds, lakeshores and slow moving streams with muddy bottoms. Males spend a majority of the day near water, either perched or patrolling and defending small areas. Both sexes will mimic wasps by beating their wings and pumping their abdomens up and down while perched.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Common Whitetail

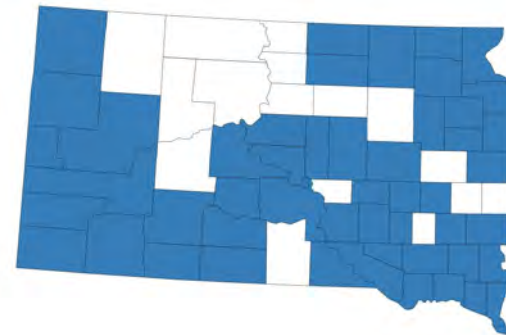


Female Common Whitetail

Description: Common, widespread dragonfly observed at most standing bodies of water. *Male:* Eyes and face dark brown Thorax dark brown with two faint pale stripes along side. Abdomen white. Outer portion of each wing has large broad brown or black bands. *Female:* Eyes and face brown. Thorax brown with two white to yellow stripes on side that are outlined in black. Wings each have three dark spots.

Similar Species: Male **Eight-spotted Skimmer**, **Widow Skimmer**, **Twelve-spotted Skimmer** all have white abdomens but vary in wing patterns. Female wing pattern similar to the female **Twelve-spotted Skimmer** but differs in abdomen pattern.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Variety of lakes, ponds, and slow moving streams. Larvae are very tolerant of a wide range of water conditions so adults can be observed near stagnant pools of water.





Male Variegated Meadowhawk



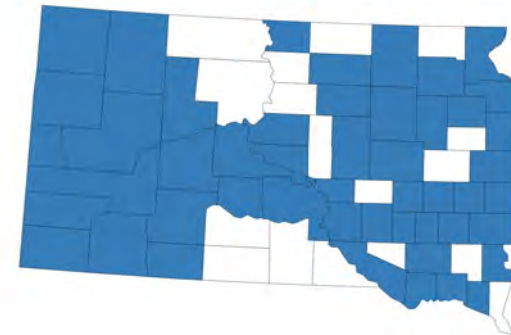
Female Variegated Meadowhawk

Description: Large meadowhawk, mostly tan or gray in color with intricate patterns on abdomen and a pair of oblique white stripes with a distinct round yellow spot on the lower end on either side of the thorax.

Male: Eyes red above and pink to tan below. Face and abdomen reddish brown. Legs black with a brown stripe along the sides. **Female:** eyes, face and thorax brownish tan. Abdomen is brown with white spots on the sides of S3-S8. Lines between abdomen segments is light brown.

Similar Species: Yellow spots on the lower sides of the thorax along with the complex patterning on the abdomen distinguish the Variegated Meadowhawk from other species.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shallow lakes, ponds, and slow moving streams. Migratory species. Can be observed in large numbers, particularly in the spring and late fall. May perch on the ground more than other species of meadowhawks.





Male Saffron-winged Meadowhawk

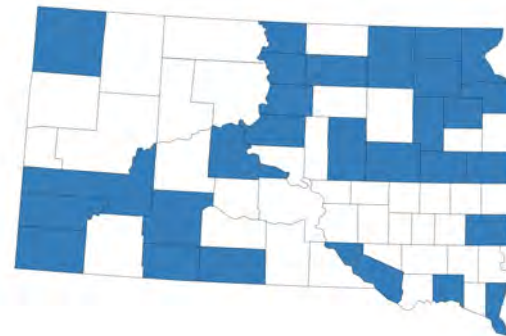


Female Saffron-winged Meadowhawk

Description: Red meadowhawk with amber markings along front edge of wings. *Male:* Eyes dark reddish brown, face tan and hairy. Thorax reddish brown with thin black lines. Abdomen red, usually with black line along side. Abdomen is spindle shaped, being narrow near the base, widening at S5-6 and becoming narrow again. Legs are light brown to black. *Female:* Yellow and tan in color. Eyes are dull red to tan. Abdomen has black markings similar to male but reduced.

Similar Species: The **Cherry-faced, White-faced, and Ruby Meadowhawks** all have more extensive black markings on the abdomen and have solid black legs.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shallow marshes, ponds, and lakes with emergent vegetation. Tolerant of alkaline waters. Individual commonly perch on the ground and can be observed hovering wait height offshore. Females typically lay eggs in open water or on wet shorelines while being accompanied by the male.





Male Black Meadowhawk

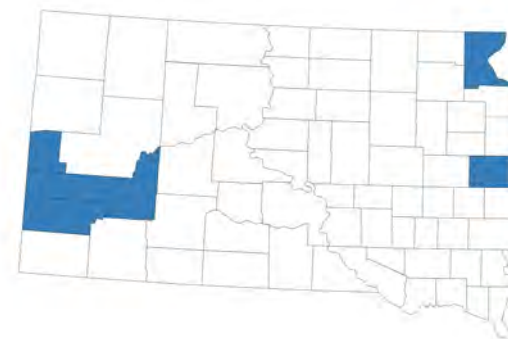


Female Black Meadowhawk

Description: Small black, or black and yellow colored meadowhawk. *Male:* Face is black when mature, or yellow when immature. Thorax, abdomen and appendages are completely dark brown to black. *Females:* Tan face with reddish brown over pale green eyes. Front of thorax is brown and the sides are pale yellow with complex branching pattern of black stripes. Abdomen is yellow to tan with a continuous black stripe along the sides.

Similar Species: No males of any other species are all-black in coloration. **Band-winged Meadowhawk** (female) - the only other species that has a complex pattern of black stripes on the thorax. However, the female Black Meadowhawk has small yellow spots within the black marks that are not present on the Band-winged Meadowhawk.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shallow lakes, ponds, bogs, fens, or marshes with abundant emergent vegetation. Males are not strongly territorial and can be observed scattered throughout wetlands. Females commonly perch in vegetation, more often higher up in shrubs.





Male Cherry-faced Meadowhawk

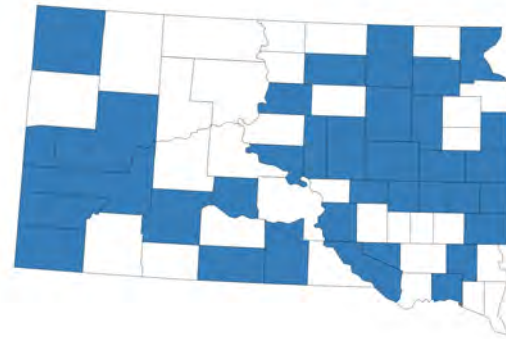


Female Cherry-faced Meadowhawk

Description: Small meadowhawk with red face, yellow-orange colored veins near wing base, black markings on abdomen and black legs. *Male:* Eyes, face, abdomen and thorax red. Abdomen has elongated black triangles on the sides of S4-9 which change to a rectangle shape toward the rear. *Female:* Eyes red-brown over tan. Face, abdomen and thorax tan. Abdomen has a continuous black stripe along side of S4-9.

Similar Species: Males have a different face color than the **White-faced Meadowhawk**, are slightly smaller and have a redder face than the **Ruby Meadowhawk** and have more black on abdomen than the **Saffron-winged Meadowhawk**. Female's thorax is mostly one color versus the contrasting brown and yellow colored abdomen of the **White-faced Meadowhawk**.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shallow ponds and lake edges that often become dry in the summer. Males have small territories that are often close to each other in dry, grassy areas.





Male White-faced Meadowhawk

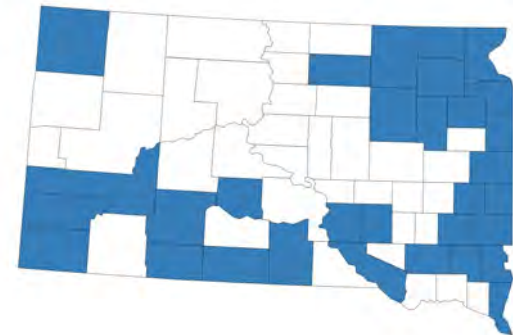


Female White-faced Meadowhawk

Description: Dragonfly with white face, black legs, and black marks on abdomen. Eyes are reddish-brown above and pale green below. *Male:* Brown thorax and bright red abdomen with black triangles along the sides. *Female:* Face is paler than the male. Light brown thorax with pale yellowish areas below. Tan abdomen with black lateral stripe. Wings may have some orange coloration near the bases.

Similar Species: The male Ruby and Cherry-faced Meadowhawks are the only other species with prominent black triangles on a red abdomen. However, the Cherry-faced has a red face and the Ruby has a light brown face. Female White-face Meadowhawks usually have a paler face, darker wing veins and more abdomen contrast than the Cherry-faced Meadowhawk.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Marshes, bogs, fens and lake shorelines. Males often observed in large groups.





Male Striped Meadowhawk

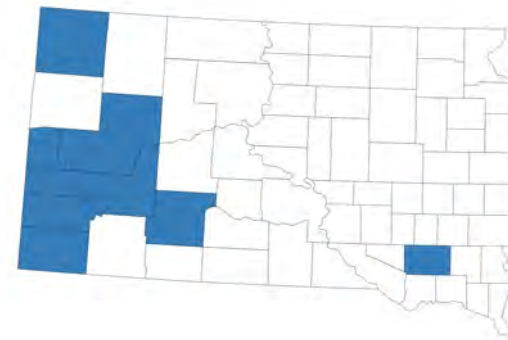


Female Striped Meadowhawk By bahubbard

Description: Red meadowhawk with white stripes on the thorax. *Male:* Eyes reddish-brown, face tan. Thorax light brown with two whitish stripes on each side. Abdomen red with lateral black triangular markings. *Female:* Eyes brown to green, face tan. Thorax and abdomen light brown to red with markings similar to male.

Similar Species: Can be distinguished from other species of meadowhawks by the combinations of the distinctive white stripes on the thorax and black markings on side of abdomen.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shallow marshes and wetlands. Males defend territories over grassy areas near water. Pairs oviposit over grass or sedges near water. Perches most often in shrubs, or on the ground in cooler weather.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Ruby Meadowhawk

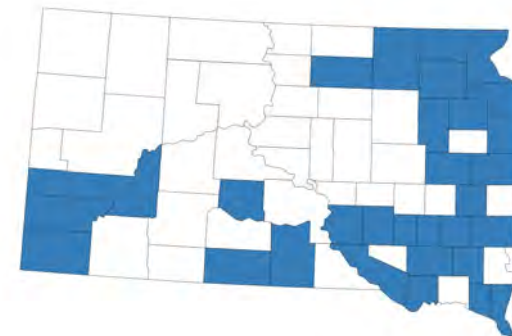


Female Ruby Meadowhawk

Description: Red meadowhawk with well-defined black triangles along abdomen and pale orange wing bases. *Male:* Eyes red and grayish-green. Thorax and abdomen bright red. *Female:* Eyes reddish-brown and pale green. Thorax brown with pale yellow on sides. Abdomen tan with black marking similar to the male but more rectangular in shape.

Similar Species: Can be distinguished from most red colored skimmer dragonfly species by the presence of the well-defined black triangles along the abdomen. The **white-faced meadowhawk** and **ruby-face meadowhawk** have a similar pattern on the abdomen but generally lack the orange color to the wing bases and average smaller than the ruby meadowhawk.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Lakes, marshes, ponds, and slow-moving streams.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Band-winged Meadowhawk

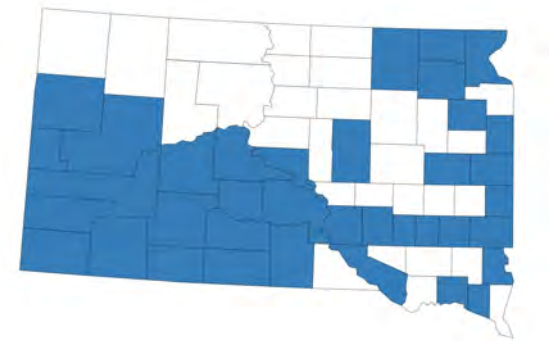


Female Band-winged Meadowhawk

Description: Dragonfly with extensive amber patches at the base of wings. *Male:* Eyes reddish-brown over green. Thorax reddish-brown with black stripes extending from the legs toward the wings. Abdomen bright orangish-red with black stripe along sides. *Female:* Patterned similar to male but overall duller in color.

Similar Species: Only species of meadowhawk with extensive amber patches at wing bases.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Grassy meadows, open ponds and marshes. Both sexes often observed away from water flying over clearings high above the ground and perched high up in trees. Pairs oviposit in shallow water among emergent vegetation.





Male Autumn Meadowhawk

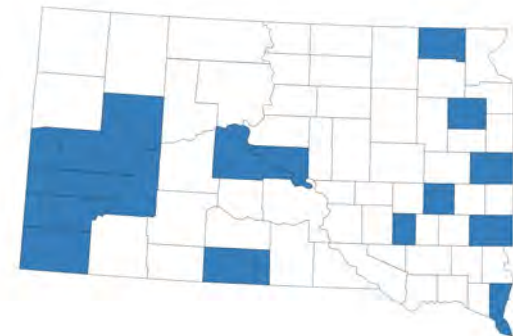


Female Autumn Meadowhawk

Description: Delicate, red to yellow meadowhawk. *Male:* face, eyes and body entirely red with narrow black markings toward end of abdomen. Wings are clear with a slight trace of amber color toward base. *Female:* Eyes red over tan, thorax and abdomen tan to red with similar black markings as male.

Similar Species: The **cherry-faced**, **white-faced**, and **ruby meadowhawks** all have heavier black markings along the sides of the abdomen. The **saffron-winged meadowhawk** has amber marks along the front edge of the wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds and lakes that typically are surrounded with vegetation. Adults are commonly observed in clearings and forest edges in the late summer and early fall. Typically perch high up in shrubs or tree cover. Pairs oviposit in tandem close to shoreline, laying eggs in shallow water or on wet vegetation.



Skimmer Dragonflies



Male Black Saddlebags

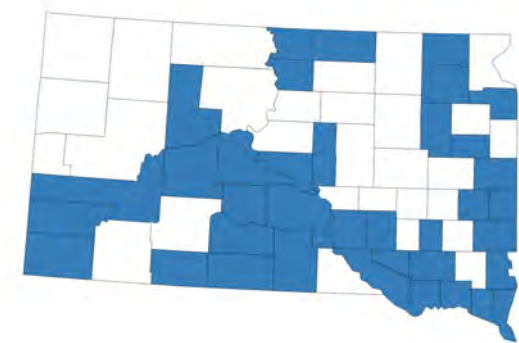


Immature Female Black Saddlebags

Description: Dragonfly with conspicuous large dark marks at the base of the hindwings. *Male:* Eyes dark brown to black, face dark purple. Thorax dark brown with metallic black markings. Abdomen black, sometimes with yellow marks on S7. *Female:* Overall color is duller than the male. Immatures are dark brown with yellow markings along the top of most the abdomen.

Similar Species: Only black-colored saddlebag species in South Dakota. The **Spot-winged Glider** also has dark marks at the base of the hindwings but they are significantly smaller.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Shallow lakes and pond with aquatic vegetation. Can be observed far from water where they will roost on dead twigs in treetops.





Male Red Saddlebags

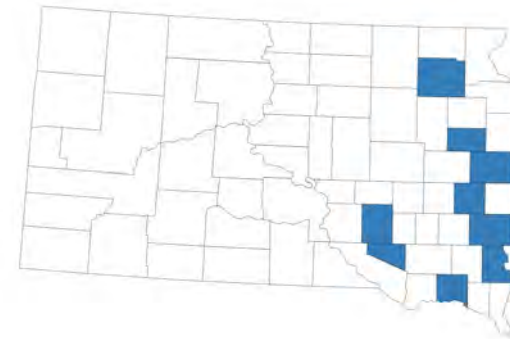


Female Red Saddlebags

Description: Red dragonfly with large dark red marks at base of hindwings. *Male:* Face and top of eyes are bright red. Thorax reddish-brown and either unmarked or with scattered black markings. Abdomen bright red with black spots on top of S8-S9. *Female:* Similarly marked as male but dull amber in color.

Similar Species: No other species in South Dakota has dark red saddlebag marks on hind wings.

Breeding Habitat & Behavior: Ponds, lakes and slow moving streams. Can be observed roosting on dead twigs high in trees. Males defend territories by flying along shorelines and over open water.



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Odonata Central: <https://www.odonatacentral.org/#/>

Odonate Guides

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Robert DuBois

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South Dakota Records Based on Larval Specimens

From 2018 to 2021, the Day Conservation District surveyed waterbodies in northeastern South Dakota to determine the aquatic insect fauna of wetlands, lakes, creeks and rivers in Codington, Day, Deuel, Grant, Marshall, and Roberts counties. More than 1,500 specimens of Odonate larvae were collected from these waterbodies.

RMB Laboratories in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, was contracted to identify to species level, if possible, all specimens collected during the study. A total of 49 species of damselflies and dragonflies were identified from larval specimens collected during this study.

Several specimens identified were new species for the state or represented significant range expansions. As of this publication, no further surveys have been undertaken to collect adults for the following species, nor have these specimens been verified by other Odonate specialists. Therefore, we are listing these separately from those species confirmed in South Dakota by adult specimens and observations.

Damselflies

Spreadwing Damselflies (Lestidae)

Elegant Spreadwing (*Lestes inaequalis*)

In 2019, two larvae identified as *Lestes inaequalis* were collected from a wetland in the east unit of Pickerel Lake Recreation Area in Day County. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. Occurs in eastern Minnesota.

Pond Damsels (Coenagrionidae)

Double-striped Bluet (*Enallagma basidens*)

In 2020, seven larvae identified as *Enallagma basidens* were collected from the North Fork Whetstone River in Grant County. Occurs in Fall River and Todd Counties. Said to be expanding its range from the southwestern U.S. to the northeast.

Turquoise Bluet (*Enallagma divagens*)

In 2020, sixty-one larvae identified as *Enallagma divagens* were collected from the North Fork Yellowbank River and Willow Creek in Codington County; Big Sioux River, North Fork Yellowbank River, and Whetstone River in Grant County; Big Slough Creek and North Fork Whetstone River in Roberts County. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. A southern United States species.

Slender Bluet (*Enallagma traviatum*)

In 2020, ten larvae identified as *Enallagma traviatum* were collected from the Whetstone River in Grant County. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. An eastern United States species.

Vesper Bluet (*Enallagma vesperum*)

In 2018, two larvae identified as *Enallagma vesperum* were collected from Enemy Swim Lake in Day County. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. Occurs in central Minnesota. This species begins to fly during the early evening hours and adults may be missed due to their crepuscular flight habits.

Fragile Forktail (*Ischnura posita*)

In 2020, thirteen larvae identified as *Ischnura posita* were collected from the North Fork Yellowbank River in Grant County, and Big Slough Creek in Roberts County. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. Reported from southeastern Minnesota and northern Nebraska.

South Dakota Records Based on Larval Specimens (cont'd)

Dragonflies

Darners (Aeshnidae)

Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*)

Twenty-three larvae identified as *Anax longipes* were collected from four sites in Roberts County in 2021: Big Coulee Creek, Jim Creek, Long Hollow, and North Fork Whetstone River. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. The closest known population occurs in southeast Iowa. Known to stray northward from established range.

Clubtails (Gomphidae)

Black-shouldered Spinylegs (*Dromogomphus spinosus*)

In 2018, one larva identified as *Dromogomphus spinosus* was collected from the Little Minnesota River in Roberts County. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. Occurs in northcentral Minnesota.

Skimmers (Libellulidae)

Belted Whiteface (*Leucorrhinia proxima*)

Twelve larvae identified as *Leucorrhinia proxima* were collected from the North Fork Yellowbank River, Codington County; Peterson Waterfowl Production Area wetland, Marshall County; Schuchard Waterfowl Production Area wetland, Roberts County in 2019. If confirmed this would be a new species for South Dakota. Occurs from northcentral Minnesota to eastern North Dakota.

Flame Skimmer (*Libellula saturata*)

In 2018, two larvae identified as *Libellula saturata* were collected from the upper Big Sioux River in Grant County. Previous South Dakota observations are from Custer, Fall River, and Pennington Counties. The Black Hills population is considered disjunct from the main population located in southwestern U.S. If confirmed this would be a significant eastward range expansion.

Species Index and Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 1)

This checklist includes all species known to occur in South Dakota as of 2025, based on adult and larval records. Species included on this list based only on larval records are in blue font and do not have full species accounts. Report new county and state records to [iNaturalist](#) and/or [Odonata Central](#).

Common and scientific names follow this source: Paulson, D. R. and S. W. Dunkle. 2021. [A Checklist of North American Odonata](#).

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
DAMSELFLIES					
Broad-winged Damselflies (Calopterygidae)					
	<i>Calopteryx aequabilis</i>	river jewelwing			12
	<i>Calopteryx maculata</i>	ebony jewelwing			13
	<i>Hetaerina americana</i>	American rubyspot			14
Spreadwing Damselflies (Lestidae)					
	<i>Archilestes grandis</i>	great spreadwing			15
	<i>Lestes australis</i>	Southern spreadwing			16
	<i>Lestes congener</i>	spotted spreadwing			17
	<i>Lestes disjunctus</i>	northern spreadwing			18
	<i>Lestes dryas</i>	emerald spreadwing			19
	<i>Lestes forcipatus</i>	sweetflag spreadwing			20
	<i>Lestes inaequalis</i>	elegant spreadwing			
	<i>Lestes rectangularis</i>	slender spreadwing			21
	<i>Lestes unguiculatus</i>	lyre-tipped spreadwing			22

Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 2)

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae)					
	<i>Amphiagrion</i> spp	western red damsel			23
	<i>Argia alberta</i>	Paiute dancer			24
	<i>Argia apicalis</i>	blue-fronted dancer			25
	<i>Argia emma</i>	Emma's dancer			26
	<i>Argia fumipennis</i>	variable dancer			27
	<i>Argia immunda</i>	Kiowa dancer			28
	<i>Argia lugens</i>	sooty dancer			29
	<i>Argia moesta</i>	powdered dancer			30
	<i>Argia funebris</i>	springwater dancer			31
	<i>Argia vivida</i>	vivid dancer			32
	<i>Coenagrion angulatum</i>	prairie bluet			33
	<i>Coenagrion resolutum</i>	taiga bluet			34
	<i>Enallagma anna</i>	river bluet			35
	<i>Enallagma annexum</i>	northern bluet			36
	<i>Enallagma antennatum</i>	rainbow bluet			37
	<i>Enallagma basidens</i>	double-striped bluet			38
	<i>Enallagma boreale</i>	boreal bluet			39
	<i>Enallagma carunculatum</i>	tule bluet			40

Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 3)

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae) cont'd					
	<i>Enallagma civile</i>	familiar bluet			41
	<i>Enallagma clausum</i>	alkali bluet			42
	<i>Enallagma divagens</i>	turquoise bluet			
	<i>Enallagma ebrium</i>	marsh bluet			43
	<i>Enallagma exsulans</i>	stream bluet			44
	<i>Enallagma hageni</i>	Hagen's bluet			45
	<i>Enallagma praevarum</i>	arroyo bluet			46
	<i>Enallagma signatum</i>	orange bluet			47
	<i>Enallagma traviatum</i>	slender bluet			
	<i>Enallagma vesperum</i>	vesper bluet			
	<i>Ischnura cervula</i>	Pacific forktail			48
	<i>Ischnura damula</i>	plains forktail			49
	<i>Ischnura perparva</i>	western forktail			50
	<i>Ischnura posita</i>	fragile forktail			
	<i>Ischnura verticalis</i>	eastern forktail			51
	<i>Nehalennia irene</i>	sedge sprite			52

Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 4)

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
DRAGONFLIES					
Darners (Aeshnidae)					
	<i>Aeshna canadensis</i>	Canada darner			53
	<i>Aeshna constricta</i>	lance-tipped darner			54
	<i>Aeshna interrupta</i>	variable darner			55
	<i>Aeshna palmata</i>	paddle-tailed darner			56
	<i>Aeshna umbrosa</i>	shadow darner			57
	<i>Anax junius</i>	common green darner			58
	<i>Anax longipes</i>	comet darner			
	<i>Boyeria vinosa</i>	fawn darner			59
	<i>Rhionaeschna californica</i>	California darner			60
	<i>Rhionaeschna multicolor</i>	blue-eyed darner			61
Clubtails (Gomphidae)					
	<i>Arigomphus cornutus</i>	horned clubtail			62
	<i>Arigomphus submedianus</i>	jade clubtail			63
	<i>Dromogomphus spinosus</i>	black-shouldered spinyleg			
	<i>Erpetogomphus designatus</i>	eastern ringtail			64
	<i>Gomphurus externus</i>	plains clubtail			65
	<i>Gomphurus fraternus</i>	midland clubtail			66
	<i>Gomphurus vastus</i>	cobra clubtail			67

Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 5)

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
Clubtails (Gomphidae) cont'd					
	<i>Phanogomphus graslinellus</i>	pronghorn clubtail			68
	<i>Stylurus amnicola</i>	riverine clubtail			79
	<i>Ophiogomphus severus</i>	pale snaketail			70
	<i>Stylurus intricatus</i>	brimstone clubtail			71
	<i>Stylurus notatus</i>	elusive clubtail			72
	<i>Stylurus plagiatus</i>	russet-tipped clubtail			73
Cruisers (Macromiidae)					
	<i>Macromia illinoensis</i>	swift river cruiser			74
Emeralds (Corduliidae)					
	<i>Dorocordulia libera</i>	racket-tailed emerald			75
	<i>Epithea cynosura</i>	common baskettail			76
	<i>Epithea petechialis</i>	dot-winged baskettail			77
	<i>Epithea princeps</i>	prince baskettail			78
	<i>Epithea spinigera</i>	spiny baskettail			79
	<i>Somatochlora ensigera</i>	plains emerald			80
	<i>Somatochlora minor</i>	ocellated emerald			81
	<i>Neurocordulia molesta</i>	smoky shadowdragon			82

Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 6)

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
Skimmers (Libellulidae)					
	<i>Brechmorhoga mendax</i>	pale-faced clubskimmer			83
	<i>Celithemis elisa</i>	calico pennant			84
	<i>Celithemis eponina</i>	halloween pennant			85
	<i>Erythemis simplicicollis</i>	eastern pondhawk			86
	<i>Leucorrhinia hudsonica</i>	hudsonian whiteface			87
	<i>Leucorrhinia intacta</i>	dot-tailed whiteface			88
	<i>Leucorrhinia proxima</i>	belted whiteface			
	<i>Libellula forensis</i>	eight-spotted skimmer			89
	<i>Libellula luctuosa</i>	widow skimmer			90
	<i>Libellula pulchella</i>	twelve-spotted skimmer			91
	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	four-spotted skimmer			92
	<i>Libellula saturata</i>	flame skimmer			93
	<i>Pachydiplax longipennis</i>	blue dasher			94
	<i>Pantala flavescens</i>	wandering glider			95
	<i>Pantala hymenaea</i>	spot-winged glider			96
	<i>Perithemis tenera</i>	eastern amberwing			97
	<i>Plathemis lydia</i>	common whitetail			98

Checklist of South Dakota Damselflies and Dragonflies (page 7)

	Scientific Name	Common Name	When observed	Where observed	Species Account Page #
Skimmers (Libellulidae) cont'd					
	<i>Sympetrum corruptum</i>	variegated meadowhawk			99
	<i>Sympetrum costiferum</i>	saffron-winged meadowhawk			100
	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	black meadowhawk			101
	<i>Sympetrum internum</i>	cherry-faced meadowhawk			102
	<i>Sympetrum obtrusum</i>	white-faced meadowhawk			103
	<i>Sympetrum pallipes</i>	striped meadowhawk			104
	<i>Sympetrum rubicundulum</i>	ruby meadowhawk			105
	<i>Sympetrum semicinctum</i>	band-winged meadowhawk			106
	<i>Sympetrum vicinum</i>	autumn meadowhawk			107
	<i>Tamea lacerata</i>	black saddlebags			108
	<i>Tamea onusta</i>	red saddlebags			109