

Dragonflies of The Ridges Sanctuary

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Painted skimmer [*Libellula semifasciata*]



(Wkimedia commons: [photo](#) by Benny Mazur)

- Commonly found between May and late July. They prefer shallow marshes with lots of plants.
- “Most Wanted” Species by WDS
- WI Species of interest
- The Painted skimmer has eight dark brown spots on its wings, which have a slight golden color.
- Submitted to Wisconsin Odonate Society (WOS) in 2015, spotted on Wintergreen & Sandy Trails.
- This species is commonly found in places southeast of Wisconsin, though its population can range from New Brunswick down to Florida.

Black meadowhawk [*Sympetrum danae*]



By Piet Spaans - Own work, CC BY-SA 2.5,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1677887>

- Found from mid-July to early October in clear streams near bogs or marshes
- Submitted to WOS in 2016
- The Black meadowhawk was the first meadowhawk to be scientifically described, originally getting its name in 1776

Boreal bluet [*Enallagma boreale*]



By Mike Ostrowski from North Bethesda, Maryland, USA - Boreal Bluet, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11053936>

- Found from late May through mid-July in most slow-moving bodies of water.
- New county record set at The Ridges Sanctuary.
- Boreal bluets are the first bluet species to emerge during the year.

Familiar bluet [*Enallagma civile*]



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- Found from June through October, with the population peaking in August and September. Will lay eggs in even brackish bodies of slow water.
- New county record set at The Ridges.
- The familiar bluet is one of the most common bluet species, and is extending its range northward into newly forming wetlands and marshes.
- Male bluets are entirely noncompetitive. They do not fight rivals nor protect any kind of territory during mating season.

Azure bluet [*Enallagma aspersum*]



By Dendroica cerulea from Highland Park, NJ, United States - Azure Bluet, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=33346904>

- Most common in June and July but can be found all through August.
- The Azure bluet prefers shallow ponds and small lakes, especially those lacking fish.
- “Most Wanted” Species by WDS
- Unlike the Familiar bluet, Azure males are fiercely territorial and will attempt to drive rivals out of favorable breeding locations. However, both the Familiar and Azure bluets are excellent colonizers of newly created habitats.

- Both male and female Azure bluets share the same coloration, with the males being identified primarily by the lack of black spots at the ends of their tails.

Double-striped bluet [*Enallagma basidens*]



By Judy Gallagher - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/52450054@N04/7185755366/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=54617320>

- Found from early May through mid-September, peaking in June and July.
- Prefers lakes and temporary ponds, especially with nearby vegetation.
- The range of the Double-striped bluet expanded upwards from Southwest to the Northeast in the last century. It is a new arrival to Door County and remains an uncommon find.
- Wisconsin species of Special Concern
- New County Record set during Ridges Odonate survey.

Eastern forktails [*Ischnura verticalis*]



By D. Gordon E. Robertson - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
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- Found from late May through early October, but most common in June.
- Prefers ponds and marshes but will lay eggs in a wide variety of water bodies.
- New County Record at set The Ridges.
- One of the more common and widespread species in the Great Lakes region.
- Females of the species will flutter wings at males, this is likely more of a threat than courting display.

Citrine forktail [*Ischnura hastata*]



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- Found from June to mid-September, peaking in July.

- Prefers ponds, lakes, and permanent seepage areas, especially places which are thick with vegetation.
- “Most Wanted” by WDS.
- New County Record set during Ridges Odonate Survey.
- One of the smallest damselfly species, with adults less than an inch in length.

Twelve-spotted skimmer [*Libellula Pulchella*]



By Cephas - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
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- Found from late May through September, preferring soft-bottomed water bodies like ponds, lakes, and marshes.
- The Twelve-spotted skimmer will find a particular perch (sticks, reeds) and return to it even if disturbed.
- Name was changed from Ten-spot to Twelve-spot, now counting the black marks on the wings instead of the white ones. These spots form little rings when blurred by flight.

Widow skimmer [*Libellula luctuosa*]



By Clinton & Charles Robertson from Del Rio, Texas & College Station, TX, USA - Dragonfly, Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*) (6), CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2228687>

- Can be found from late May through August near ponds, lakes, and marshes.
- The wing ornamentation is prominent only on the males of the species.
- Will commonly perch on the tips of reeds or grasses near water.

Common whitetail [*Plathemis lydia*]



By Bruce Marlin - Own work http://www.cirrusimage.com/dragonfly_common_whitetail.htm, CC BY-SA 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=656580>

- Found from late May to early September in a variety of water bodies, especially those with muddy bottoms.
- Contrary to this photo, Common whitetails primarily perch on the ground.
- Both males and females have black wing ornamentation, but only the males have the bright white body, which is used as a tool of intimidation during mating competition.
- Males compete to control territory during breeding season, and will occasionally attempt to steal females from another's territory.

Black saddlebags [*Tramea lacerata*]



By JerryFriedman - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
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- Found from mid-June through September. Prefers ponds, lakes, and marshes with lots of aquatic vegetation.
- Both males and females have black ornamentation on back wings
- When laying eggs, males carry females over the water and repeatedly drops her so she can release her eggs. The female then flies back up to the male to be taxied to the next spot.

Calico pennant [*Celithemis elisa*]



By Christina Butler from Georgia, United States - Calico Pennant - *Celithemis elisa* ♂, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=95894030>

- Found from late May to mid-August on still or slow-moving water bodies, especially those with reeds or other tall vegetation growing near the shore.
- Males will perch on top of sticks and reeds above streams and will occasionally patrol the area looking for mates or potential rivals.
- Both males and females have similar coloring of the body and wing ornaments.

Halloween pennant [*Celithemis eponina*]



By Richard Stovall - <https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/109173176>, CC BY 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=100110079>

- Adults are active from early June to late September.
- Though the Halloween pennant will lay its eggs in a wide variety of slow-moving bodies of water, it will often hunt in meadows and slopes away from the water. It can be found from as high as the Upper Peninsula down to the Florida Everglades.
- Halloween pennants are the only species with both tinted wings and banded ornamentation (as opposed to the spots of the Calico pennant), both males and females have these features.
- Halloween pennants are strong flyers and will be found flying in winds or rains which might make other species shelter on the ground.

Ebony jewelwing [*Calopteryx maculata*]



By William L. Farr - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
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- Found from mid-May to early September, but most common in early June.
- Prefers smaller forest streams with plenty of shade.
- Both males and females have black wings, which are used for signaling during mating displays and competition.

River jewelwing [*Calopteryx aequabilis*]



By Reuven Martin - Own work, CC0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=87045450>

- Found from mid-May through early September, but most common in early June.
- Prefers medium to large sized forest streams, but only with open canopy.
- Both males and females have wings that are tinted yellow with black ornamentation at the tip. These wings are moved in sequence as part of the males displays of fitness during courting.

Hine's Emerald [*Somatochlora hineana*]



[Photo credit: Thomas Scharrenberg] A Male Hine's Emerald

- Adult Hine's can be found from early July through August.
- Hine's emeralds are the only dragonfly on the federally endangered species list. The ICUN Red List believes that there are only about 30,000 individual Hine's emeralds left on the planet, of which 20,000 live in Door County.
- Hine's emeralds stay in their pre-adulthood nymph form for 4 years before turning into their flying adult form for just over a month. Hine's larvae have very specific habitat requirements, living in clean water over limestone bedrock. Some clay is also required for the female Hine's to originally lay her eggs into.
- Hine's will often take shelter in the burrows of the Devil Crayfish during the Summer and Winter. Crayfish burrows are deep enough so that they do not dry up in the summer nor freeze in the winter. Scientists currently do not fully understand how the Hine's nymph avoids being eaten by the crayfish during this time.

- While their eyes might be the most visually striking feature of the Hine's, the feature is also common in many of the other species of Emeralds living in Door County. A Hine's is best identified by the specific pattern of lime-green stripes on the side of its body, or by the unique shape of the clasper at the end of a male Hine's tail.
 - DO NOT try to catch a Hine's emerald. Collecting adults or nymphs of the species is illegal without a federal permit.
- The best time to spot a Hine's is in the late morning on a warm and sunny day. Hine's can often be found in groups with other species while feeding.
- Current threats to the Hine's emerald are urban sprawl, runoff of road salt, and pesticides commonly used in apple or cherry orchards. All of these reduce the quality of water which the Hine's depend upon to reach adulthood.