

Dragonfly identification chart

Six regional examples | Eastern United States, with a Mid-Atlantic focus | Online Field Guide

Check wing patches, thorax and face together. Females and immature males often have different colors.

1. Common green darner

Anax junius



Green thorax; long abdomen and clear wings

Adult male in flight

2. Blue dasher

Pachydiplax longipennis



Male: blue abdomen, dark tip and striped thorax

Mature adult male

3. Eastern pondhawk

Erythemis simplicicollis



Female: green body with dark abdominal markings

Green adult female

4. Common whitetail

Plathemis lydia



Male: white abdomen and broad dark wing bands

Mature adult male

5. Widow skimmer

Libellula luctuosa



Dark wing bases; mature males add white patches

Mature adult male

6. Twelve-spotted skimmer

Libellula pulchella



Three dark patches on each of four wings

Mature adult male

1. Adam Jackson.
2. Meghan Cassidy. CC BY-SA 4.0.
3. Laura Gaudette. CC BY 4.0.
4. Glenn Berry.
5. skitterbug. CC BY 4.0.
6. Sean Frey. CC BY 4.0.

Comparison notes and photo credits

Dragonfly chart companion | Original layout and wording by Online Field Guide

Dragonfly	Habitat or nesting clue	Identification level	Adult activity
Common green darner	Ponds, marshes and other still waters	Species candidate	Spring through fall
Blue dasher	Vegetated ponds and slow water	Species candidate; male pattern	Late spring through summer
Eastern pondhawk	Ponds, lakes and nearby low vegetation	Species candidate; female pictured	Late spring through summer
Common whitetail	Ponds, marshes and slow streams	Species candidate; male pattern	Spring through summer
Widow skimmer	Ponds, lakes and wetland edges	Species candidate; male pattern	Late spring through summer
Twelve-spotted skimmer	Ponds, lakes and marshy margins	Species candidate; male pictured	Late spring through summer

The season column gives a broad adult activity window. Water type is a supporting clue, and adults may hunt away from their breeding pond. Read the photo label before comparing body color.

Photo credits and original file links

1. **Common green darner:** *Anax junius* - iNaturalist photo 155762126, by Adam Jackson.
2. **Blue dasher:** *Pachydiplax longipennis* - iNaturalist photo 5454508, by Meghan Cassidy. CC BY-SA 4.0.
3. **Eastern pondhawk:** *Erythemis simplicicollis* - iNaturalist photo 20918015, by Laura Gaudette. CC BY 4.0.
4. **Common whitetail:** *Plathemis lydia* - iNaturalist photo 138740353, by Glenn Berry.
5. **Widow skimmer:** *Libellula luctuosa* - iNaturalist photo 63019656, by skitterbug. CC BY 4.0.
6. **Twelve-spotted skimmer:** *Libellula pulchella* - iNaturalist photo 82426676, by Sean Frey. CC BY 4.0.

Identification references: Common green darner; Blue dasher; Eastern pondhawk; Common whitetail; Widow skimmer; Twelve-spotted skimmer.

This chart compares regional examples; it is not a complete species key.