

*Friends of SCNP -*

## Dragonfly Challenge

Dragonflies come in lots of colors and patterns and are among the best fliers in the natural world. And Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve is a great place to go dragonfly watching!

So here is our challenge:

1. Download this "challenge guide"
  2. Take it with you as you visit one of the ponds at the preserve
  3. What colors do you see?
  4. What behaviors do you see?
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### Dragonflies vs. Damselflies

Almost always, DRAGONFLIES are larger, and when perching they hold their wings out to the side. They have big round heads with wrap-around compound eyes.

DAMSELFLIES are smaller, and when perching their wings are usually folded over their bodies. Their eyes are smaller and stick out a little on the sides of their heads.

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#### Basic Parts of a Dragonfly

Head

Thorax

Six legs (can be seen underneath the wings)

Wings

Abdomen

## Starting Out in the Water

Dragonflies lay eggs in the water, and the eggs hatch into a “nymph” that does not look anything like the adult.



## Colors and Kinds

Dragonfly wings may be clear or they may be tinted or have bands of color. Their bodies may have different colors depending on the species and gender (in some species the males and females look very different).

When you are out dragonfly-watching, even if you're not sure what kind of dragonfly you are seeing, you can notice what colors and wing patterns you see. Check off which ones you find:



☐ Clear wings



☐ Amber wings



☐ Dark wing bars



☐ Both dark and light wing bars

☐ Blue bodies☐ Green bodies☐ White "tails"☐ Other body colors

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## Behaviors

You could see all kinds of things! Watch for interactions between dragonflies, special positions like the "obelisk" position, and hovering, swooping, and flying backward! Check off or describe what you see:

- ☐ Flying at the surface and dipping the abdomen into the water (laying eggs)
- ☐ Perching with the abdomen high in the air on a hot day (the obelisk position, which minimizes sun contact and keeps the dragonfly cooler)

- ☐ Two dragonflies together, each with its abdomen curling over or under to connect with the other dragonfly (the wheel position, used for mating)
  - ☐ Chasing (dragonflies sometimes chase each other away to protect a favorite hunting or perching spot)
  - ☐ Other interesting flying maneuvers or interactions:
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So, how many different wing patterns were you able to check off? How many body colors? Were you able to check at least a couple of different behaviors or positions? We hope so!

If you use the community science app "iNaturalist," maybe you can post a photo or two from your observations and confirm the species you saw. The photos in this challenge were:

1. Roseate skimmer
2. Eastern amberwing
3. Common whitetail
4. Widow skimmer (male)
5. Eastern pondhawk (male)
6. Eastern pondhawk (female)
7. Common whitetail
8. Halloween pennant

Thanks for taking our Dragonfly Challenge!

Please visit Friends of Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve at <https://FriendsofSCNP.org>. You can contact us at [info@FriendsofSCNP.org](mailto:info@FriendsofSCNP.org). We are on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofSCNP/>.