

Wildlife of the Month



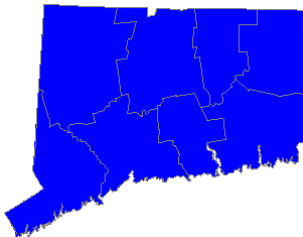
Photographed at the Clark Pond Dam in the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve

Slaty Skimmer

Libellula incesta

At-a-Glance

- Length: 50 mm
- Typical Foods: gnats, mayflies, flies, mosquitoes and many other flying insects.
- Distribution in Connecticut



The Slaty Skimmer is quickly recognized by its large size, deep blue thorax and abdomen, and clear wings with a small dark area at the tips of the wings.

Habitat and Habits

Found throughout the eastern United States and southeast Canada, this species prefers quiet waters with a mucky bottom, usually in or near forest, sometimes including rivers.

Reproduction

This dragonfly has a life span of more than a year, but very little of that life is actually as an adult dragonfly. Most of the life cycle of a dragonfly is lived out in the nymph stage, which lives underwater.

A male and female mate while they are flying in the air. The female lays her eggs either on a plant in the water, or just drops them into the water.

The eggs will hatch into a nymph. Dragonfly nymphs live in the water while they grow and develop into adults. As nymphs, the dragonflies eat mosquito larvae, other aquatic insects and worms, and even small aquatic vertebrates like tadpoles and small fish.



Dragonfly Nymph

The mature nymph crawls out of the water, sheds its skin and will then be a young dragonfly. The dragonfly will hunt for food and begin to look for a mate. A dragonfly can eat food equal to its own weight in about 30 minutes. Adult dragonflies only live about two months.