

## QUICK GUIDE TO DAMSELFLY & DRAGONFLY FAMILIES

### Most useful features for identification:

	Damselfly (pg. 2)	Dragonfly (pg. 3-4)
<b>Head</b>	eye color; eye spots/bars	eye color & shape; color & markings on face (T-spot, line)
<b>Thorax</b>	shape & color of stripes on top & sides	presence, shape, and color of stripes on top & sides
<b>Abdomen</b>	color; markings on top, esp. S2 and S8-S10	color; markings on top & underside; presence of “club” at tip
<b>Wings</b>	color & shape of stigma; orientation when perched	color of wing bases, veins, and stigma; color & shape of wing spots, bands, or patches
<b>Legs</b>	color	color

Forewings & hindwings similar in size & shape, held together over abdomen or no more than partly spread when perched; eyes widely separated (i.e., by the width of the head)



**Damselfly**



Vivid Dancer (*Argia vivida*); CAS Mazzacano

Hindwings broader than forewings; wings held out horizontally when perched; eyes meet at front of head or slightly separated (i.e., by less than the width of the head)



**Dragonfly**



Cardinal Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum illotum*);  
CAS Mazzacano

**DAMSELFLIES**

2

Wings narrow, stalked at base

Wings broad, colored, not stalked at base

3

Wings held askew when perched

Wings held together when perched

**Broad-winged Damselfly (Calopterygidae); streams**



River Jewelwing (*Calopteryx aequabilis*); CAS Mazzacano

**Spreadwing (Lestidae); ponds**

**Pond Damsels (Coenagrionidae); ponds, streams**



California Spreadwing (*Archilestes californicus*); CAS Mazzacano

Wings held above abdomen; vivid colors

Dancer (*Argia*); streams

Wings held alongside abdomen; mostly blue

Bluet (*Enallagma*); ponds

Dark abdomen with blue tip; small projection off top of S10

Forktail (*Ischnura*); ponds/streams

4



Vivid Dancer (*Argia vivida*); CAS Mazzacano



Tule Bluet (*Enallagma carunculatum*); CAS Mazzacano



Pacific Forktail (*Ischnura cervula*); CAS Mazzacano

**DRAGONFLIES**

2

Eyes touch along all or most of inner edges

Eyes separated or touching only at single point on head

**Darners, Skimmers, Emeralds , Cruisers**

**Clubtails, Spiketails, Petaltails (see next page)**

large; body green or blue; stripes on thorax; eyes touch; perch vertically

→ Darner; streams, ponds

wide range of colors; wings often with color or pattern; may be pruinose

→ Skimmer; ponds

eyes green; thorax hairy, iridescent

→ Emerald; streams, lakes

large; iridescent blue thorax with yellow stripes

→ Cruiser; streams

3



Blue-eyed Darner male (*Rhionaeschna multicolor*); CAS Mazzacano



Western River Cruiser male (*Macromia magnifica*); Jim Johnson/Encyclopedia of Life



American Emerald (*Cordulia shurtleffii*); CAS Mazzacano



Flame Skimmer male (*Libellula saturata*); CAS Mazzacano

# DRAGONFLIES

## Clubtails, Spiketails, Petaltails

4

eyes separated; terminal segments of abdomen expanded; green & brown or black body



Clubtail\*; mostly streams



Bison Snaketail male (*Ophiogomphus bison*); CAS Mazzacano

eyes touch at single point; large; brown or black & yellow body; lower tip of female abdomen has spike; perches at 45° angle



Spiketail; small streams



Pacific Spiketail male (*Cordulegaster dorsalis*); John Martin/iNaturalist

*Cordulegaster dorsalis* is the only spiketail species known in Oregon.

eyes separated; large; black body with yellow spots on thorax & abdomen



Petaltail; bogs, seeps



Black Petaltail (*Tanypteryx hageni*); CAS Mazzacano

*Tanypteryx hageni* is one of only two petaltail species in North America & has a very narrow western range; the Gray Petaltail (*Tachopteryx thoreyi*) is found in the east.

\*In 2017, the genus *Gomphus* was re-organized and is no longer recognized as valid in North America. Visit [www.OdonataCentral.com](http://www.OdonataCentral.com) and click on Official Checklist to North American Odonata for current genera.