

Blue Corporal



Blue Corporal (*Ladona deplanata*) – 1.4", 34-38 mm

Flight Record:
(4/11-6/06)
Peaks
late April-
mid May.

*Uncommon to
Fairly Common*

Habitat:
Shallow, sunny
ponds/pools.
More common
on the
coastal plain.

First Glance:
Small, blue
(males), tan
(females).
Light stripes on
front thorax.
Amber & black
windows on
wings. Perches
frequently on
low flat
surfaces, often
on the ground.

Compare:
Blue Dasher,
Pondhawk,
Common
Baskettail
(female)

M



Male:
Light blue
stripes
(fade
away
w/age)

Juv M

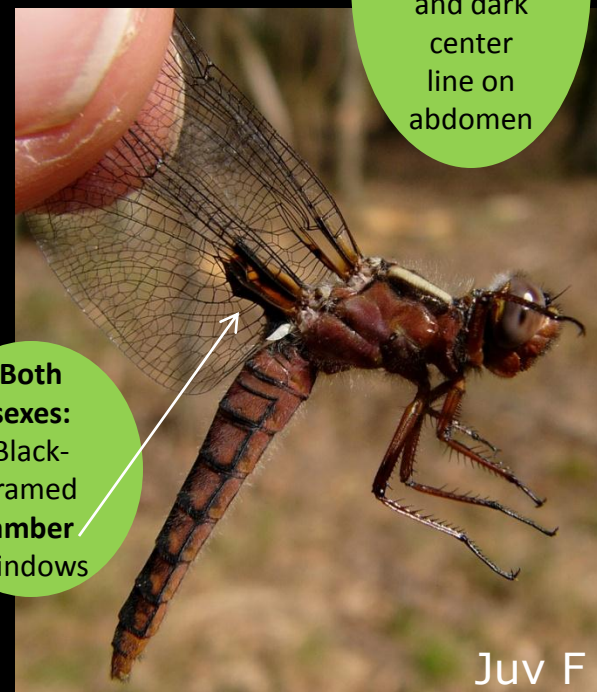


**Both
sexes:**
Dark eyes
& face,
and dark
center
line on
abdomen



Female:
White stripes
on thorax

Juv F



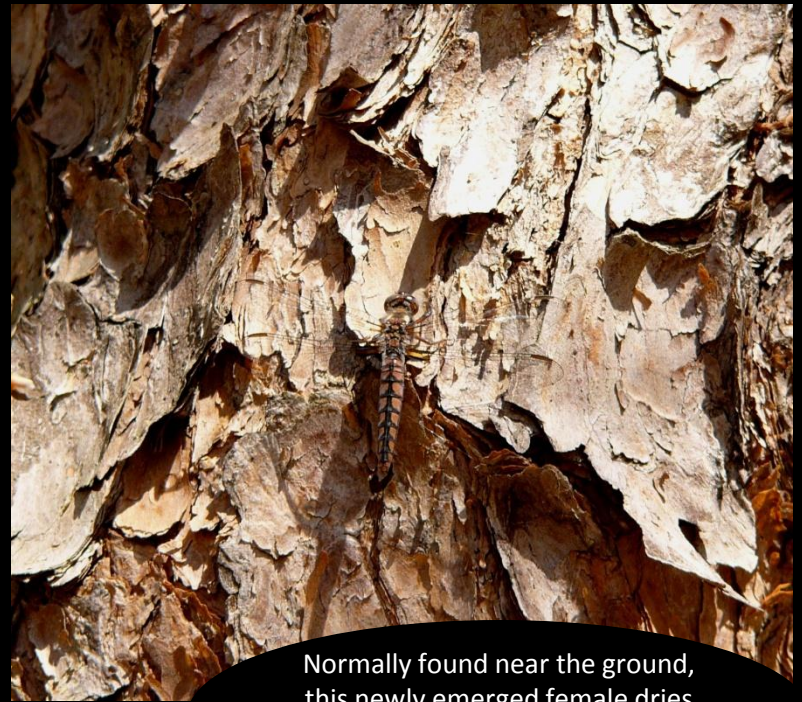
**Both
sexes:**
Black-
framed
amber
windows

Juv F

Notes from the field – Blue Corporal:

Blue Corporals are one of the best examples of a local species. For a few weeks in spring, parks around Mason Neck and Occoquan Bay can have hundreds of these beautiful, tame little dragonflies. In those areas they are briefly abundant, with numbers similar to more common species like the Blue Dasher and Autumn Meadowhawk. However, almost everywhere else in Northern Virginia they're downright rare. In Reston, where I've lived for over 30 years, I've seen *one* individual. Riverbend Park, in Great Falls, has had several extensive and professional dragonfly surveys, and yet only *one* Blue Corporal has ever been found. Certain coastal plain parks appear to provide exactly what they need, while the rest of Northern Virginia falls short.

This species is also a great example of how to use *behavior* and the *calendar* for ID. Blue Corporals almost always perch low, and are one of only 8 local dragonfly species that routinely perch on the ground. In addition, they have an early and brief flight period – they appear in mid-April and are gone by June. These two facts, coupled with being rare outside of our coastal plain parks, make ID relatively easy. Add to that those black and amber windows at the base of their wings, dark eyes, and light stripes on the top front of the thorax, and you won't have any trouble identifying them.



Normally found near the ground, this newly emerged female dries her fresh wings high on a sun-drenched tree trunk.

