

Spangled Skimmer



Spangled Skimmer (*Libellula cyanea*) – 1.7", 41-46 mm

Flight Record:
(5/14-8/13)
Peaks
May-June.

*Fairly
Common*

Habitat:
Shallow,
marshy
waters.

**First
Glance:**
Medium.
Bright blue
body
(males),
yellow &
brown
(females).
Unique
black &
white
stigmas.
Frequent
percher.

Compare:
Eastern
Pondhawk,
Yellow-sided
Skimmer,
Slaty
Skimmer



Notes from the field – Spangled Skimmer:

Here's another skimmer that shuns the typical stormwater detention pond and prefers very shallow, vegetated, marshy pools. Ponds that include marshy shallows along their edge, or at their in/outflows may also host a few spangleds. But to see large populations of this somewhat skittish species, you'll want to seek out flooded meadows, dirt roads with marshy puddles, or shallow, coastal plain marshlands. Spangleds also prefer late spring and early summer - most of them are gone by late July.

Both males and females have body markings similar to several skimmer species. However, this dragonfly is quite easy to ID because of its unique black and white stigmas, shared by no other local species. The very similar, but quite rare, Yellow-sided Skimmer can be separated by its *yellow* and black, rather than *white* and black stigmas.

This beautifully shaded female Spangled Skimmer rests on a sunny grass stem in one of the parklands off Gunston Hall Road in southern Fairfax County. Still gathering energy and warmth from the morning sun, she allowed me to take pictures from just a few inches away. She was still sun-bathing when I left her to explore the rest of the meadow.

This Spangled Skimmer shares a marshy perch with a Unicorn Clubtail.

Males of different species often tolerate each other's close presence, since they're competing for different females.

