

Blue Dasher



Blue Dasher (*Pachydiplax longipennis*) – 1.0-1.7", 28-45 mm

Flight Record:

(5/18-10/08)

Peaks

June-August.

Abundant

Habitat:

Most sunny, still-waters, favors marshy ponds.

Tolerant of degraded watersheds.

First Glance:

Small, blue w/ black tip (male), dark with light marks (female).

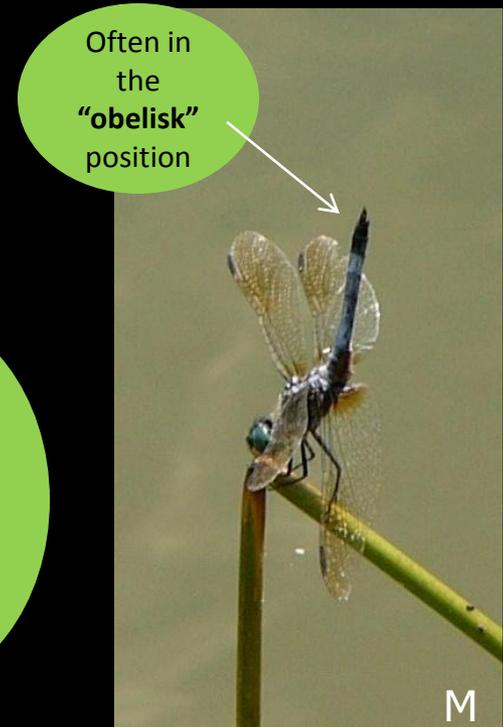
Both: striped thorax. Very active. Often perches with wings forward or abdomen raised.

Compare:

Pondhawk, Blue Corporal, Little Blue Dragonlet



Tony Robison



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Notes from the field – Blue Dasher:

A very little guy in a big hungry world, Blue Dashers make up for their small size with plenty of moxie. Just about everything eats them (as the Dasher caught in a spider's web to your right is about to discover), but it certainly hasn't effected their numbers. The most abundant dragonfly in our area, they face their predator-filled worlds head on. Males aggressively defend their small, shore-line territories against larger skimmers, and spend a great deal of time with their black-tipped abdomens pointed high in the air - an aggressive threat display. It's also a technique used to cool down by reducing surface area to the sun, called the *obelisk* position. However, Dashers use it more than other species, and half the time it appears to be done for the purpose of territorial display, rather than temperature control.



Evidence of their moxie, or at least their adaptability, can be seen in their widespread use of urban habitats. They seem able to breed in stormwater ponds too degraded for most dragonflies, and appear to view parking lots as a fun place to hang out. I often see them perched on cars in my townhouse development.

The one in the photo to your left spent the afternoon claiming my car antenna as *his*. Parked outside a busy nature center, I watched as he went back and forth between my car and several school buses (visible in the background), oblivious to automotive exhaust and dozens of chattering children.