

Slaty Skimmer



Slaty Skimmer (*Libellula incesta*) – 2.0", 50-52 mm

Flight Record:

(6/02-10/10)

Peaks

July-August.

Common

Habitat:

Most aquatic habitats.

Prefers still, vegetated, sunny waters.

First

Glance:

Medium.

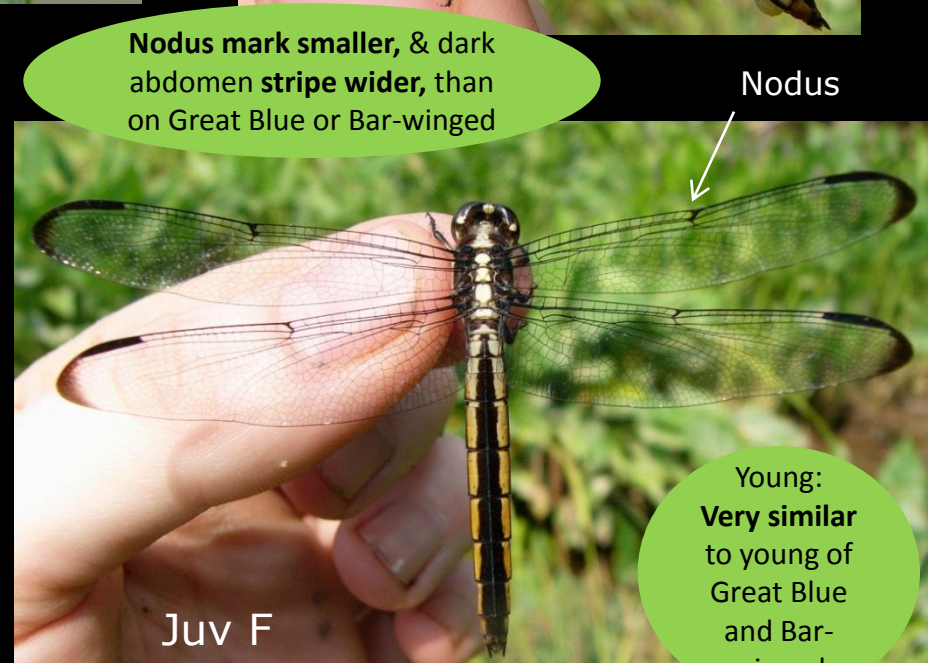
Dark blue, w/ blackish head.

Young have cream & brown marks.

Frequent percher.

Compare:

Skimmers:
Great Blue & Bar-winged



Notes from the field – Slaty Skimmer:

Dark, common and seemingly friendly, this member of the King Skimmer genus (*Libellula*), does appear to be curious, if not actually friendly. Males especially will often hover face to face with dragonfly watchers, using all 56,000 of their dark-eyed lenses to analyze the strange intruder. In fact, it's probably their king skimmer territorial aggression that leads them to this mid-air staring contest, but I prefer to think of them as curious 😊

This species is a true habitat generalist; only whitetails and pondhawks can be found in as many different habitat types. I've seen Slaties along river edges, sunny sections of woodland stream, ponds, lakes, swamps, old roads and flooded meadows. Dragonflies of summer, if you're in any of these habitats June through September, you're likely to come face to face with a Slaty Skimmer.

Adults are easy to ID due to their dark heads & bodies, and lack of strong markings. Juveniles can however be rather tricky, as they're *very* similar to the young of Great Blue and Bar-winged Skimmers. Slaties aren't as big as either, and their nodus spot is visibly smaller. The Slaty face, even on juveniles, has at least some tan or darker markings, while Great Blues of all ages have bright white faces. Finding clear differences between Bar-winged and Slaty young is especially tough. Other than body and nodus size, one's left with subjective details of abdomen stripes and thoracic side patterns. However, Bar-winged Skimmers are uncommon and habitat specialists, so odds are, the confusing juvenile you're trying to ID is the highly adaptable Slaty Skimmer.

Mating Slaties in the "wheel" position.



Notice the uniquely dark head.

