

July - Week 2

Mosquitoes and Dragonflies

The hot summer weather provides conditions that increase our chances of encountering mosquitoes when we venture outside, especially at dawn and dusk. The buzz you hear when you encounter a mosquito comes from female mosquitoes coming close to you to land to draw some blood. They need the blood of mammals like humans to help them develop their eggs that they lay in or around wetlands.

Dragonflies, which spend most of their life in water as eggs and nymphs, emerge from wetlands, molt and take flight. During the second week of July the number of adult dragonflies peaks. One of the favorite foods of many adult dragonflies is mosquitoes. Dragonflies use their front pair of legs as a 'basket' to catch mosquitoes as they dart around through the air. Take time this week at dawn or dusk to seek out dragonflies hunting prey such as mosquitoes. Prepare for this with long sleeves and long pants or apply some bug spray. Visit open grassy areas in parks, paths along wetlands or even your front or back yard. What kind of dragonflies are you able to observe? Notice their colorful bodies and look at their wings. Some species have black bands or patches in their wings while others are clear. Do you see them land and take off from a favorite perch? If so, is the perch a tall stem of grass, a tree branch, or cattail?

Sketch some of your observations of dragonflies and document the numbers of dragonflies. How many mosquitoes do you notice? Are they bothering you or are you prepared for them? If you are unable to observe dragonflies, are there other mosquito hunters around? Check for bats flying at dusk too.



Dragonflies feast on mosquitos.