

Dragonfly Detectives

a citizen science safari

Did you know...

...there are over 3,000 known species of dragonflies in the world? There are about 650 in North America, and around 150 recorded in Vermont.

...each wing of a dragonfly has its own set of muscles, allowing the insect to fly in all directions, even backward or upside-down.

...dragonflies can hit speeds of up to 35 mph!

...as larvae in the water and as adults on the wing, dragonflies are an important part of the food web as both ferocious predator and belly-filling prey.

...when a dragonfly larva is ready to become an adult, it leaves the water to cling to anything above the surface where it “ecloses,” drying out and splitting the larval exoskeleton to emerge as an adult. When its wings and body are filled with fluid and dried, it flies away to finish hardening and continue its life cycle. The exoskeleton, called an exuvia, is left behind for a week or two, or until rain or wind dislodge it.



Our goals

- Build an accurate inventory of dragonfly species breeding in our area
- Track eclosure timing from year to year
- Compare species between habitats
- Enjoy nature while engaging in citizen science!

Learn to locate and carefully collect the fragile exuviae at the water body of your choosing. Work with BRAT to get the samples to Springfield VT, and we'll identify them all to genus and some to species level. Data will be uploaded to an iNaturalist project page, and the adventure continues as we watch the map fill in and expand!

Learn more: blackrivercleanup@gmail.com or leave message at 802-738-0456