

QUICK GUIDE TO DAMSELFLY & DRAGONFLY FAMILIES

Most useful features for identification:

	Damselfly (pg. 2)	Dragonfly (pg. 3-4)
Head	eye color; spots/bars	eye color & shape; color & markings on face (T-spot, line)
Thorax	shape & color of stripes on top & sides	presence, shape, and color of stripes on top & sides
Abdomen	color; markings on top, esp. S2 and S8-S10	color; markings on top, esp. S2 and S8-S10; presence of “club” at the end
Wings	color & shape of stigma; orientation when perched	color of wing bases, veins, and stigma; color & shape of wing spots, bands, or patches
Legs	color	color

Forewings & hindwings similar in size & shape, held together over abdomen or no more than partly spread when perched; eyes widely separated (i.e., by the width of the head)

Hindwings broader than forewings; wings held out horizontally when perched; eyes meet at front of head or slightly separated (i.e., by less than the width of the head)

1

Damselfly



Vivid Dancer (*Argia vivida*); CAS Mazzacano

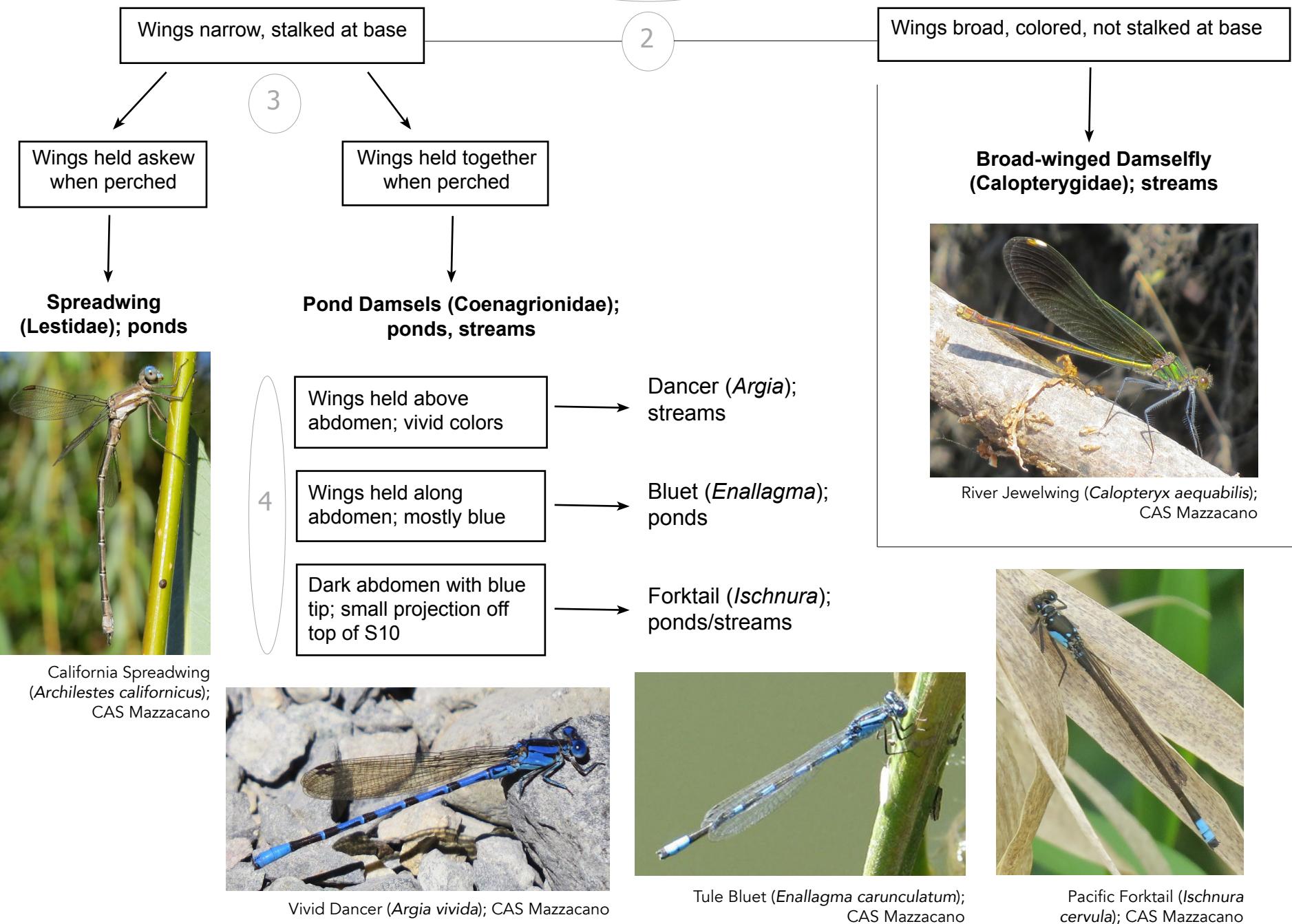


Dragonfly



Cardinal Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum illotum*);
CAS Mazzacano

DAMSELFLIES



DRAGONFLIES

2

Eyes touch along all or most of inner edges

Darners, Skimmers, Emeralds , Cruisers

large; body green or blue; stripes on thorax; eyes touch; perch vertically

Darner; streams, ponds

wide range of colors; wings often with color or pattern; may be pruinose

Skimmer; ponds

eyes green; thorax hairy, iridescent

Emerald; streams

large; iridescent blue thorax with yellow stripes

Cruiser; streams



Western River Cruiser male (*Macromia magnifica*); Jim Johnson/Encyclopedia of Life



American Emerald (*Cordulia shurtleffii*); CAS Mazzacano



Blue-eyed Darner male (*Rhionaeschna multicolor*); CAS Mazzacano



Flame Skimmer male (*Libellula saturata*); CAS Mazzacano

3

DRAGONFLIES

Clubtails, Spiketails, Petaltails

4

eyes separated; last segments of abdomen expanded; green & brown or black body



Clubtail*; mostly streams



Bison Snaketail male (*Ophiogomphus bison*); CAS Mazzacano

eyes touch at single point; large; brown or black & yellow body; lower tip of female abdomen has spike; perches at 45° angle



Spiketail; small streams



Pacific Spiketail male (*Cordulegaster dorsalis*); Jim Johnson/iNaturalist

eyes separated; large; black body with yellow spots on thorax & abdomen



Petaltail; bogs, seeps



Black Petaltail (*Tanypteryx hageni*); CAS Mazzacano

*In 2017, the genus *Gomphus* was re-organized and is no longer recognized as a valid genus. Visit OdonataCentral.com and click on the Official Checklist to North American Odonata for current genera.

Cordulegaster dorsalis is the only spiketail species known in Oregon.

Tanypteryx hageni is one of only two petaltail species in North America & has a very narrow western range; the Gray Petaltail (*Tachopteryx thoreyi*) is found in the east.