

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Field dragonfly

Order: Orthoptera (Grasshoppers, Crickets, and Locusts)

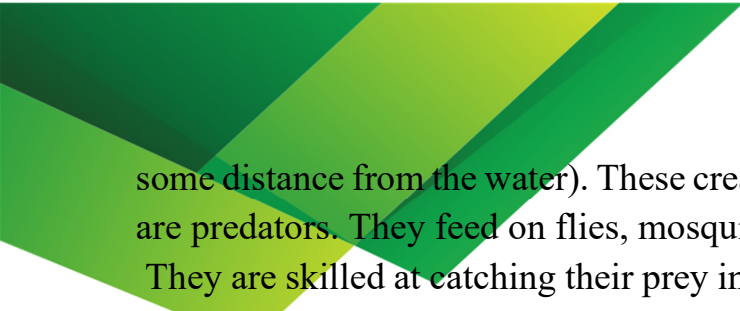
Family: Gryllidae (True Crickets)

Genus: Gryllus

Species: *Gryllus campestris* (Field Cricket)



The field dragonfly (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) is a species of dragonfly in the family Libellulidae of the order Odonata, distinguished by its bright colors and agility. These dragonflies are especially widespread in the Azerbaijan region and form an important part of the ecosystem. To recognize field dragonflies, it is necessary to pay attention to their color and body structure. It is a medium-sized dragonfly, with a body length of usually 3-4 cm and a wingspan of 5-6 cm. Males are bright blood-red in color during adulthood (hence the name: *sanguineum* means “bloody” in Latin). Females and young males are usually yellowish-brown in color. The most distinctive feature of this species is that its legs are completely black. In other similar species (for example, the common dragonfly), the legs may have yellow stripes. It is transparent, but there may be small orange-yellow spots on the seat of the wings. Dragonflies are widespread in a very wide geography – from Europe to Siberia, from Central Asia to North Africa. However, they prefer such environments as stagnant or very slow-moving water (lakes, ponds, swamps), water bodies with abundant vegetation on the shore, gardens, meadows and forest edges (they can hunt even at



some distance from the water). These creatures lead an active daytime lifestyle. They are predators. They feed on flies, mosquitoes and other small flying insects.

They are skilled at catching their prey in the air. Field dragonflies usually like to sit on the tip of a plant and observe the surroundings. When they see an insect, they suddenly attack and return to the same place or another nearby point. In Azerbaijan and similar climates, they can be seen mainly from June to mid-October. The life cycle of the field dragonfly is complex: After fertilization, the female dragonfly lays her eggs on the water or in moist soil near the shore. The larvae (nymphs) that hatch from the eggs live in the water.

They are also predators and feed on aquatic insects, even small buckets. The larval stage lasts 1 year. In the summer of the following year, the larva emerges from the water and climbs a plant stem, molts and turns into a winged adult. They naturally regulate their population by eating large numbers of mosquitoes and flies. The presence of these dragonflies in an area is an indicator of a relatively healthy water and ecosystem. Field dragonflies, unlike other insects, can move all four wings independently of each other. This gives them the ability to hover in the air or suddenly fly back.

