

Swarm of dragonflies startles beachgoers in Rhode Island

A swarm of dragonflies stunned and surprised beachgoers last weekend in Rhode Island.

Thousands of the dragonflies, relatively large and often beautifully colored insects, descended on Misquamicut beach last Saturday. Video of the dragonflies shows beachgoers running for cover and hiding under blankets. People could be heard screaming.

It's unclear what prompted the cloud of insects to visit the beach for several minutes and then largely disappear.

“One minute everything was calm. The next minute I saw the most dragonflies I’ve ever seen in my life,” Nicole Taylor told WFSB-TV. “It lasted for like 3 minutes, and then they were gone. It was a very strange experience.”

Many people online suggested that the event had a spiritual meaning. “They are giving us a message,” one person wrote in the replies to a TikTok post. Another said it was heaven’s gates opening.

The blue dasher dragonflies were most likely not migrating, according to David W. Gregg, executive director of the Rhode Island Natural History Survey. “They were most likely looking for better habitat. They are especially territorial and defend little patches of pond shore,” Gregg told The Post. He said a milder winter has probably contributed to more dragonflies hatching this year. “Central Massachusetts and Rhode Island have been in a drought the last couple of weeks,” he said. “What happened was their ponds started to dry up and the mosquito population started to decline, and suddenly it put pressure on them.”

Typically these dragonflies don't move in swarms, but it can happen, according to Gregg. The beach is not a good habitat for dragonflies, so they were probably moving north.

Gregg says there's nothing to fear about a dragonfly swarm.

"People shouldn't be afraid. They don't bite or sting. The worst thing that can happen is they eat all the mosquitoes."