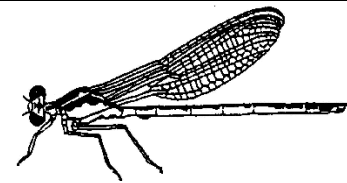


Ode News



An Occasional Newsletter about Dragonflies and Damselflies in Southern New England

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May 2004

Welcome to *Ode News*, now entering its eleventh year of publication! We've survived another "real" New England winter, which, although not especially snowy, was one of the coldest in a couple decades or more. Good riddance to it! Although the winter was dry, the early spring was very wet (the wettest ever in Boston!), and as we head into the field season water levels range from normal to well above normal.

The cold damp weather of the early spring, resulted in the season's first dragonfly appearing later than we've become accustomed to in recent years. But finally a bubble of warm air in the third week of April resulted in the widespread arrival of Common Green Darners, which were reported simultaneously from three sites on 19 April: two males at one of Rhode Island's boghaunter sites (G. Brown); six in W. Groton, MA (J. Liske); and several, including an ovipositing pair in southern Berkshire County, MA (G. Corbiere). Additional reports came from several more sites the following day.

The first New England Odonate Conference in Athol, MA, on 17 April was a rousing success. The conference was attended by about 140 enthusiastic participants, far exceeding our most optimistic expectations! It was a perfect opening to the 2004 season and, given the remarkable response, we look forward to additional conferences in the future. See page 6 for an account of the event.

New resources for odonatists continue to appear at a dizzying pace. The newest, and perhaps most

notable, is *Damselflies of the Northeast*, a superb new field guide by Ed Lam of New York. You will not want to head into the upcoming field season without a copy of this guide in your possession (see page 8)! Also new is a DVD, *Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of Eastern North America*, by Dick Walton and Greg Dodge; this, too, we recommend highly (see page 8). In this issue we have reviews of *A Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Massachusetts* (page 9) and *Dragonflies of the North Woods* (page 11), as well as a summary of the 2003 field season in Connecticut by Mike Thomas and Dave Wagner (page 4), and a note about yet another difficult taxonomic issue facing New England odonatists.



Attenuated Bluet (*Enallagma daeckii*) — male
This lanky southern damsel is known from just a handful of sites in southeastern Massachusetts. Blair Nikula will be conducting surveys for this species during 2004, under contract with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program.

© Blair Nikula

An active schedule of field trips is in the offing this summer, and a full listing appears on page 2. Also check out Dave Small's announcement of the America Rubyspot Project on page 8 (as if they aren't already busy enough up there in the wilds of northern Worcester County!). It should be another exciting year and we hope to see you in the field!

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2004 MASSACHUSETTS WALKS AND PROGRAMS

Following are some of the activities scheduled in Massachusetts this season. Most of these events are free, but some are scheduled by organizations and require registration and/or a fee. Many are weather dependent, so if in doubt please call the leader to check on status.

May 9 (Sunday), 9:00 a.m. Concord & vicinity. A trip for early season species, including, with luck, the Ringed Boghaunter. Meet behind the variety store at Nine Acre Corner (intersection of Sudbury Road & Route 117) in Concord. Leader: Dick Walton (978-369-3729; dick@concord.org).

June 6 (Sunday), 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Quabbin Trip. Join Dave Small on this annual trip into Quabbin Reservation. This will be an all day event inside the reservation looking for birds, butterflies, dragonflies and whatever nature has to offer. Bring lunch, snacks, water, field guides, dragonfly net and binoculars. *Pre-registration required.* Call the Millers River Environmental Center (978-248-9491) or e-mail: abnc@millersriver.net.

June 16—July 21 (Wednesday evenings & Saturdays). Ode Institute. Athol Bird and Nature Club. Dave Small, club president, will run this series of classes and field trips to discover the diversity of dragonflies and damselflies found in Massachusetts. Field trips will be on the Saturdays following each evening class. *Fee:* \$40 for members of ABNC and \$50 for non-members. For info or to register call: 978-248-9491; or visit the club's web site at: www.millersriver.net/abnc/.

June 19 (Saturday), 9:00 a.m. Connecticut River Canoe Trip. A canoe trip for clubtails and other "Big River" specialties. Bring a canoe or kayak and lunch. Meet at the small dirt parking area on the west side of the river on River Road, at the intersection of Route 116 (west end of the Sunderland Bridge) in Deerfield. Leader: Blair Nikula (508-432-6348; odenews@odenews.net).

June 20 (Sunday), 9:00 a.m. Ware & Quabog Rivers. A trip to explore some poorly known riverine habitats (on foot, no canoes necessary) in southern Worcester County, searching for clubtails and other early season species. Bring lunch, drinks, and a sense of exploration. Meet at the commuter parking lot behind the McDonald's on Route 32 in Palmer (about a mile north of Exit 8 off the MassPike). Leaders: Lynn Harper (413-532-2799; HarperLynn@msn.com) and Blair Nikula (508-432-6348; odenews@odenews.net).

June 25—27. DSA Northeast meeting in Hartford, VT. See details on page 3.

July 1 (Thursday), 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. North Quabbin. An evening trip to look for UMBER Shadowdragons. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, Athol. Leader: Fred SaintOurs (fred.saintours@umb.edu).

July 7—24 July. Dragonfly Institute at Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary in Natick. See details on page 3.

June 9 & 10 (Friday & Saturday). Arcadia Sanctuary Talk and Walk. A Friday evening slide program followed by a Saturday walk at MassAudubon's Arcadia Sanctuary in Easthampton. *Fee & Pre-registration required:* \$20/members; \$25/non-members. To register call: 413-584-3009. Leader: Michael Veit.

July 17 (Saturday), 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Newburyport Talk and Walk. An introductory slide talk at MassAudubon's Joppa Flats Sanctuary followed by a walk. *Fee & Pre-registration required:* \$18 for members; \$22 for non-members. Contact the sanctuary (978-462-9998) for details and to register. Leader: Blair Nikula.



August 1 (Saturday), 9:00 a.m. Plymouth. A trip sponsored by The Nature Conservancy to search for coastal plain pond dragonflies. *Pre-registration required.* Contact The Nature Conservancy in Plymouth (508-747-4307). Leaders: Tom Maloney (tmaloney@tnc.org) and Blair Nikula (508-432-6348; odenews@odenews.net).

August 14 (Saturday), 9:00 a.m. Odes by Canoe/Kayak. This trip will focus on an area to be determined in Worcester County. Participants are responsible for their own watercraft, safety equipment, nets, lunch, drinking water, and transportation. Be prepared to wade in shallow water. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. Leaders: Dave Small (978-249-2094; dhsmall@gis.net) and Lynn Harper. (413-532-2799; HarperLynn@msn.com)

August 21 (Saturday), 9:00 a.m. Northern Berkshire County. A trip to look for darners and other late season species in the Savoy

State Forest and vicinity. Meet at the dirt parking area on the north side of Route 2 just east of the entrance to the Mohawk State Forest. Leader: Blair Nikula (508-432-6348; odenews@odenews.net).

September 4 (Saturday), 9:00 a.m. Millers River, Athol. A trip to look for late season specialties such as Arrow Clubtail and American Rubyspot. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. Leader: Dave Small (978-249-2094; dhsmall@gis.net).

September 12 (Sunday), 8:30 a.m. Green River (Franklin County). Search for Ocellated Darner and other late season species. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol at 8:30 a.m. or 9:30 a.m. at the Tourist Information Center on the Rte 2 rotary in Greenfield. Leaders Dave Small (978-249-2094; dhsmall@gis.net) and Lynn Harper (413-532-2799; HarperLynn@msn.com).

BROADMOOR DRAGONFLY INSTITUTE

This is a course for beginners sponsored by the Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary in Natick, Massachusetts, July 7–24. It will consist of three evening lectures and three field trips, focusing on the life cycle, habitat, behavior, and identification of family, genus and species. Slide lectures on Wednesday evenings (7:00 – 8:30 p.m.) July 7, 14, and 21, with field trips on Saturdays (10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.), July 10, 17, and 24. Close-focusing binoculars recommended.

Instructor: Bob Bowker; Field Trip Leaders: Bob Bowker and Blair Nikula (7/24). The fee is \$45 for MassAudubon members; \$50 for non-members. To register, call the Broadmoor Sanctuary at 508-655-2296.

2004 NORTHEAST DSA MEETING

This year's Northeast meeting of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas will be held in Hartford, Vermont, on the weekend of June 25–27. Hartford is situated in east-central Vermont, adjacent to the Connecticut River. The meeting is being coordinated by Bryan Pfeiffer and coincides with the Vermont BioBlitz scheduled for the area on June 26. Field trips on Friday and Saturday will visit areas near and along the Connecticut and Ottauquechee Rivers. Optional field trips are planned for Sunday. On Friday evening, Dr. Mark McPeck of Dartmouth University will present a program about the distribution of damselflies in relation to fish. To reserve a spot at the meeting, contact Bryan Pfeiffer at: bpfeiffer@vinsweb.org. For more information, visit: www.vinsweb.org/BioBlitz/DSA-NE.html.

2004 DSA NORTH AMERICA MEETING

The 2004 Dragonfly Society of the Americas North American meeting will be held July 8–12 in Decorah, Iowa. A pre-meeting trip July 5–8 will search the area north of Waterloo-Cedar Rapids for a yet-to-be-described species of *Ophiogomphus*. For information visit: www.windsofkansas.com/dsa2004.html.

CONNECTICUT HIGHLIGHTS – 2003

Mike Thomas & Dave Wagner

A growing band of Connecticut birders have caught the ode bug and are spreading across the state with their digital cameras and binoculars. Many, realizing the futility of on-the-wing identifications for many species, have made the investment in quality insect nets, which are wielded in “Luke Skywalker” like fashion.

During 2004, Connecticut odonatists added over 1,200 records, 10 new county records, and the re-discovery of the Rapids Clubtail (*Gomphus quadricolor*), previously believed extirpated from the state. Of the 148 species documented for Connecticut, 119, or 80%, were reported during the 2003 field season. As is to be expected, finding new state and county records is becoming increasingly difficult, but even more rewarding.

Overall, early season adult numbers seemed to be down, perhaps due to the cool, wet weather experienced during the spring and early summer (refer to Massachusetts Highlights—2003, *Ode News*, Vol. X, No. 2). The slow start to the season may also explain the numerous late records reported, with new late dates documented for 37 species. Most surprising was a newly emerged Ashy Clubtail (*Gomphus lividus*) found along the Farmington River on 13 July (MT). One species that seemed to have a “boom” year was the Lance-tipped Darner (*Aeshna constricta*), which greatly outnumbered the Shadow Darner (*A. umbrosa*) at a number of sites.

A summary of some of the more noteworthy finds during the 2003 season is provided below.

Connecticut state-listing designations: [E] = Endangered; [T] = Threatened; [SC] = Special Concern. *Observers*: Michael Beauchene, Tom Fiore, Danielle Gustafson, Andy Guthrie, Greg Hanisek, Jay Kaplan, Brad Kline, Cindy Kobak, Noble Proctor, Dave Provencher, Mark Szantyr, Mike Thomas, Dave Wagner, Ryan Wagner, Kristine Wallstrom, Fran Zygomont.

Superb Jewelwing (*Calopteryx amata*) [SC]: Survey efforts resulted in the discovery of three additional populations: West Branch of the Farmington River in Hartland (MT, FZ); Salmon River in Granby (JK); and the Still River in Colebrook (Litchfield County)

(MT). This species has now been reported from six streams or rivers. We believe it is likely to be found on any cold-water trout stream in the northwestern corner of the state. Based on these findings, its delisting as a Species of Special Concern will be recommended.



Superb Jewelwing (*Calopteryx amata*) — female
Pittsburg, NH — June, 1995

© Blair Nikula

Sparkling Jewelwing (*Calopteryx dimidiata*) [SC]: The discovery of this coastal plain species on the Moosup River in Sterling on 18 July (MB) provided a first for Windham County.

American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*): The only reports for this striking damselfly came from a known site on the Naugatuck River (Harwinton) during 12-21 September (JK, MS). This species is believed to be declining statewide (only three extant populations) and has been proposed for listing as a species of Special Concern.

Great Spreadwing (*Archilestes grandis*): For the fourth consecutive year, this southern spreadwing was reported from the state; this time from Fairfield County where an adult was photographed in Greenwich by Andy Guthrie in his backyard on 7 September. This species appears to be expanding its range northeastward and should be sought in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Citrine Forktail (*Ischnura hastata*): Large numbers of this diminutive and infrequently encountered damsel were reported at a new site in Preston (New London County) on 23 August (DP, JK).

Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*): As in 2002, there was only one sighting of this impressive coastal plain

species, which was once again seen at Horse Pond in Madison on 23 August (JK).

Variable Darner (*Aeshna interrupta*): This northern darner was photographed along the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain (Salisbury) on 12 July (TF, DG, BK, KW), and a second individual was reported from Norfolk on 15 August (MS).

Spatterdock Darner (*Aeshna mutata*): This early season darner was again common at a number of sites across the state. Most impressive was a feeding swarm of up to six females hawking insects along the edge of a field in Canaan (Litchfield County) during the late afternoon on 29 June (MT). Once considered rare in Connecticut, it has recently been reported from all but one county (Fairfield).

Cyrano Darner (*Nasiaeschna pentacantha*): The only report of this southern darner came from a new site on the Pachaug River in Voluntown on 1 July, where up to six males were found on territory (MT).

Midland Clubtail (*Gomphus fraternus*) [SC]: During a kayaking trip on the Connecticut River north of Hartford on 29 June, up to five individuals were found perching on sandy beaches, along with a newly emerged female **Riverine Clubtail** (*Stylurus amnicola*) [SC], which was found clinging to vegetation (MT).

Rapids Clubtail (*Gomphus quadricolor*) [SC]: Last documented in 1928, this species was Connecticut's only dragonfly believed extirpated. On 15 June, a teneral female was discovered perching on vegetation in a sandplain (Simsbury) not far from the Farmington River (MT), providing a first Hartford



Rapids Clubtail (*Gomphus quadricolor*) - female
Poultney, VT—June, 1997

© Blair Nikula

County record and evidence that this regionally scarce dragonfly may be resident and breeding in the state.

Zebra Clubtail (*Stylurus scudderi*): Two new sites were discovered for this elusive species. A newly emerged adult was rescued from the East Branch of the Shepaug River in Milton on 13 July, providing a new early record (KW, BK), and larvae were found in mud sediments of the Salmon River in Simsbury on 11 October (MT). The only other report came from the Hollenbeck River in Canaan, where a single adult and several larvae were found on 20 September (RW, DW, MT).

Arrow Clubtail (*Stylurus spiniceps*) [SC]: Adults were observed on the Farmington River in Simsbury on 25 August and 2 October (JK), providing a new late record. Larvae and exuviae collections from the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers suggest this species is more abundant than previously thought, and based on these findings, it will be recommended for de-listing.

Arrowhead Spiketail (*Cordulegaster obliqua*): Larval searches in small forested streams produced two new county records: Litchfield County (Mohawk State Forest, Cornwall) on 30 May and New London County (Nehantic State Forest, Lyme) on 7 June (MT).

Umber Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*) and **Stygian Shadowdragon** (*Neurocordulia yamaskanensis*): Nine Umber and two Stygian Shadowdragons were found patrolling alongside a boat dock between 8:30 – 9:00 p.m., at a traditional site on the Connecticut River in Cromwell during the period of 20 June – 8 July (MT *et. al*).

Ski-tailed Emerald (*Somatochlora elongata*) [SC]: Several males of this rarely encountered emerald were netted and photographed along a small forested stream in Norfolk during the period 11–18 August (MS).

Mocha Emerald (*Somatochlora linearis*): The only report of this emerald was a single female photographed on 28 July in Guilford (CK).

Williamson's Emerald (*Somatochlora williamsoni*): A male hit by a car and rescued on 28 July in Morris (GH) provided the first report of the season for this seldom encountered emerald. On the evening of 13 August, a second male was taken in Canton (JK), and

on 18 August a female hawking insects along a field in Voluntown provided a first for New London County (MT).

Ringed Boghaunter (*Williamsonia lintneri*) [E]: Several adults of this rare spring denizen were photographed in Hampton and Windham during the period of 10 May – 10 June, the latter providing a new late date for the state (MS). An early instar larva

was found in a sphagnum pool on 4 May (MT), suggesting this species may sometimes require more than one year to complete larval development.

Blue Corporal (*Ladona deplanata*) [SC]: This coastal plain species was observed on several occasions in Lyme during 29 May – 23 June, establishing a new late date (CK, NP).

FIRST NEW ENGLAND ODONATE CONFERENCE

The first New England Odonate Conference in Athol, Massachusetts, April 17th, attracted about 140 participants, far surpassing all expectations and apparently making it the largest gathering of dragonfly enthusiasts ever in North America!



Conference organizers: Blair Nikula, Dave Small, and Jennifer Loose

The event was co-sponsored by the Athol Bird and Nature Club, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and *Ode News*, and organized by Dave Small, Jennifer Loose, and Blair Nikula, with the invaluable assistance of several members of the ABNC. Fifteen speakers from across New England and New York presented short programs

on a variety of topics, including a history of odonate study in the region, reviews of odonate surveys in the various states, the results of some local studies, taxonomic issues, etc. An exhibit area featured dragonfly and natural history displays as well as offerings from commercial vendors. The only complaint was that the weather was so nice everyone wanted to be out looking for the season's first dragonfly!

Excellent talks, good food, and, most important of all, great camaraderie made for a memorable day. Though not likely to become an annual event, we expect the first New England Odonate Conference will not be the last!



Dragonfly guru Nick Donnelly from New York, with Paul Sievert (back left) of Umass, and Hal White (back right). Hal traveled all the way from Delaware!



Attendees enjoy lunch, laughs, and the beautiful spring weather on the MREC lawn.



Ginger Brown and Nina Briggs (back left) from RI speaking to Don Miller of VT.

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ANOTHER “NEW” SPECIES IN NEW ENGLAND?

Blair Nikula

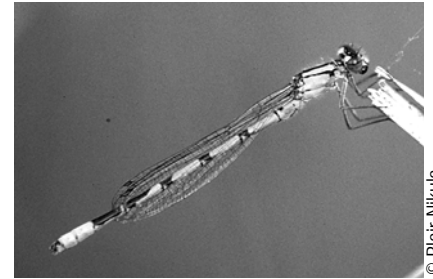
These days, it seems that additions to a local fauna are as likely to occur through taxonomic “splitting” of forms as through the discovery in the field of a previously unrecorded species in an area. For decades, odonatologists have pondered the status of a form of bluet that is nearly identical to the Northern Bluet (*Enallagma cyathigerum*), differing only in very subtle characteristics of the male appendages. This bluet generally has been considered a form of Northern Bluet, referred to as *Enallagma cyathigerum vernale*. Northern Bluets occur widely across northern portions of North America, while the form *vernale* is known only from the northeastern U. S., up into eastern Canada, where it is sympatric with the nominate form.

Nick Donnelly has been studying this problem for many years and has become convinced that *vernale* is in fact a good species. The DSA’s Committee on Common Names has responded by choosing Vernal Bluet as the common name for this “new” species. However, it is important to note this does *not* confer “official” species status. Indeed, there currently is no committee or other organization that passes judgment on the taxonomy of odonates (such as the American Ornithologists Union, for example, does with North American birds). Why is this? Good question! But that’s a topic for another time.

Altho ugh Northern and Vernal bluets are essentially identical in appearance and identifiable

only through microscopic examination, the two forms are thought to segregate by habitat, at least where their ranges overlap: Northern Bluets occur primarily in bogs or boggy pools where fish are scarce to absent, while Vernal Bluets are found in lakes and small rivers where fish are numerous. Yet, intergrades between the two apparently are common, so at least some comingling must occur. Northern Bluets have an early flight season, being on the wing in southern New England from early May into early July (averaging somewhat later northward), and presumably Vernal Bluet is similar in this regard.

Currently, the status of Vernal Bluet in southern New England is murky, at best. Clarification will require a series of specimens from throughout the region. Anyone encountering Northern-type bluets, particularly in non-boggy habitats, could advance our knowledge by taking a couple of specimens for subsequent examination in the lab.



Northern Bluet (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) - male
Falmouth, MA—June 1994

© Blair Nikula

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RESEARCH GRANTS

Each year the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (MNHESP) funds several Small Research Contracts for survey, research, outreach and education on Massachusetts' rare plants and animals. There are 31 species of odonates that are protected through the MNHESP.

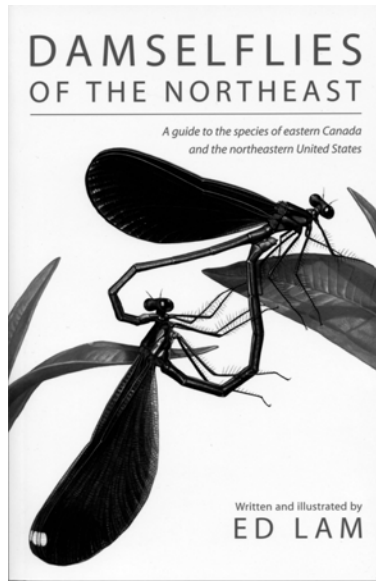
This year the MNHESP has funded four odonate proposals: assessment of distribution and conservation status of the UMBER Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*; Special Concern) in Massachusetts and surrounding states; a survey for the Scarlet Bluet (*Enallagma pictum*; Threatened) and Attenuated Bluet (*Enallagma daeckii*; Special Concern) damselflies; Connecticut River odonates and bank stabilization; and American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*; Watch-list) damselfly distribution and conservation status assessment (see page 8).

If you are interested in the Small Research Contracts program, each winter the MNHESP posts a call for proposals with a list of topics selected by our biologists on our website (www.nhesp.org). We suggest contacting the appropriate staff biologist to discuss your topic of interest prior to submitting your proposal. MNHESP is also open to receiving proposals for state-listed species that are not officially requested on our call for proposals. This program is an excellent way to work with the MNHESP, help develop our knowledge of Massachusetts' rare odonates, and further odonate conservation.

Jennifer Loose

BUY THIS BOOK!

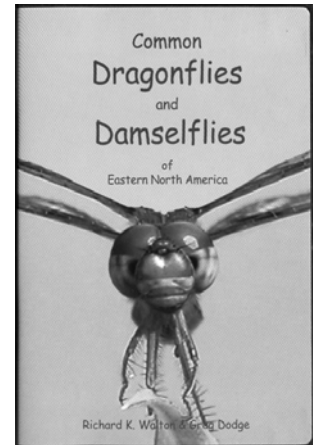
Hot off the presses and just in time for the upcoming field season is a great new field guide: *Damselflies of the Northeast*, written and illustrated (beautifully) by Ed Lam and published by Biodiversity Press. We will provide a full review in the next issue of *Ode News*, but suffice to say for now this is a superlative book, without question the finest and most attractive field guide yet to appear in North America.



The guide sells for \$20.00 and can be ordered from: <http://homepage.mac.com/edlam/book.html>. Order a copy today; you should not be without it this field season!

NEW DRAGONFLY DVD

If only we had resources like this a decade ago! Dick Walton, who produced a video to the common dragonflies of the Northeast in 1996, has teamed up with Greg Dodge to create an updated, expanded, and much more versatile version in DVD format. *Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of Eastern North America* covers about 50 species: 15 damselflies and 34+ dragonflies (three of the confusing meadowhawks are treated together). Upon starting the DVD, the viewer has the option of watching all of the video footage in sequence as a “movie,” or viewing the various segments (including each species account) individually. The narration is clear and concise and the video footage excellent: novice and expert alike will find it a joy to watch. The DVD sells for \$24.95 and can be ordered from Brownbag Productions:



www.brownbagproductions.com/brnbg2.html#top

OPERATION RUBYSPOOT 2004

The American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*) is currently a watch list species of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (MNHESP). There are four watersheds in the state with modern records, and an effort is needed to follow up on historical records and locate new populations. This effort will solidify the knowledge base of this species in the state allowing an informed review of its listing status.



© Dave Small

Through a grant from the MNHESP, the Athol Bird and Nature Club will undertake a statewide assessment of the American Rubyspot. This will include a literature review, as well as gathering information from neighboring states. We will be seeking to gather all records of rubyspots observed this season in a timely manner using the odonate listserves, phone, fax, and a web site (www.rubyspot.net) to gather reports. Where American Rubyspots are reported in the state, volunteers will conduct surveys to determine the extent of the population.

One of the features of this survey will be the effort to enlist volunteers from a wide range of sources, including Trout Unlimited and the Mass Butterfly Club along with general naturalists, to locate these distinctive gems of riverine systems. The species' striking appearance and approachability, make it easy to identify with binoculars, allowing a broader audience to participate. The success of this recruitment is important in generating interest in the study of Odonata as we move forward to a general atlas of Massachusetts dragonflies and damselflies. For more information or to volunteer please e-mail: dhs@rubyspot.net.

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES OF MASSACHUSETTS

Blair Nikula, Jennifer Loose, and Matthew Burne. 2003. *Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program*. 197 pages. 300+ color pages. 6"x 8" \$20.00.

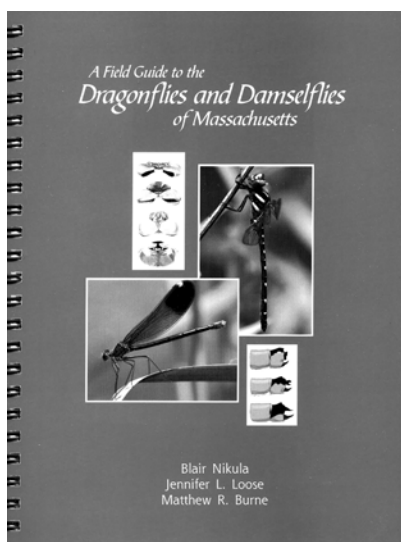
With its incredible diversity of Odonata, and equally formidable army of enthusiasts, Massachusetts has produced one of the best regional field guides to date. This guide represents the work of several experts and volunteers spanning at least four decades, as evidenced by the long list of acknowledgements, and can be used effectively throughout the Northeast.

The guide begins with a concise, user-friendly dichotomous key to families that utilizes both morphological and behavioral characteristics. The following 12-page introduction covers biology of adults and larvae, rare species, and conservation issues throughout the state, and includes color photos of dragonfly habitats as well as some tips for observing and documenting Odonata. The book is then divided into families, each with its own descriptive introductory page with natural history notes and an illustration and brief description of a typical larva.

Black-and-white illustrations of terminal appendages for the families Lestidae, Gomphidae, and Corduliidae should make identifications in the hand fairly quick and easy for these otherwise difficult groups. The guide also offers illustrated color plates for the families Coenagrionidae and Aeshnidae that will be especially useful in the field when trying to compare anal appendages of confusing *Enallagma*, or the thoracic stripes of the genus *Aeshna*. Family names printed on the outer edge of each page help to locate the desired section in a hurry. The tabs are not labeled on the back cover, unfortunately, which would have made it even easier.

The bulk of the guide consists of 166 pages of species accounts, each with two or more photos (male and female) in most cases, covering all 166 species known to occur in the state. I like the

approach used in this guide where photos and text are together, unlike many traditional field guides that have separate color plates. The nearly life-sized photos (even larger for damsels and small skimmers) are well reproduced for the most part, though a small number are blurry (*e.g.* female Southern Pygmy Clubtail) or have confusing backgrounds (*e.g.* Harlequin Darner). Overall the photos are excellent and clearly show markings used in field identification (it was the senior author's superb images that got me hooked on dragonflies in the first place).



Although there are no range maps, a brief section titled RANGE/STATUS for each species describes its known range and abundance within the state (and beyond in some cases). Town names are given for species with only one or two recorded localities. This is followed by brief but helpful species-specific notes on habitat and behavior that will assist in making proper identifications in the field, though in reviewing these I question their accuracy for one species, Southern Pygmy Clubtail, which is stated to inhabit intermittent streams. A flight period "indicator bar" is located at the bottom of each species page,

which is easy to read at a glance, and for those who like to keep "life lists" there is a checklist in the back which doubles as the guide's index.

Perhaps the most practical feature of this book is its rugged construction. The ring-style binder reduces damage from flipping through the photos, and water-resistant pages are a saving grace in the wettest of places where dragonfly hunters often find themselves (after a few dunkings my "Dunkle" is already in need of replacement). This field guide is an excellent resource for beginners, long-time enthusiasts, and experts alike, and will be an indispensable addition to any naturalist's library. For a mere \$20.00 it's a steal — even my mother wants a copy!

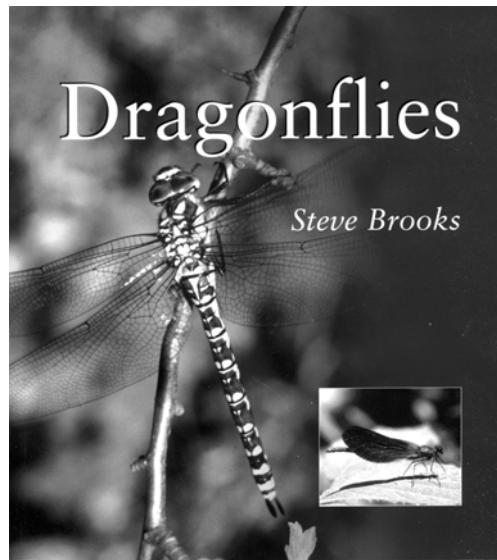
Fred SaintOurs

To order, send a check for \$20/copy (postpaid) to:
Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species
Program, 1 Rabbit Hill, Westborough, MA 01581.

DRAGONFLIES

Steve Brooks. 2003. Smithsonian Books, Washington, DC (in association with the Natural History Museum, London). 96 pages. 91 color photos plus several line drawings. 8¼" x 9¼." \$16.95.

This modest book is one of the best bargains among the world's odonate publications. Steve Brooks, who also authored the *Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland* (to my mind one of the finest field guides ever published for any group of organisms), has pulled together a very readable—though not always clear or accurate—text covering all aspects of odonate biology and natural history along with a superb collection of photos from around the world.



The book's six primary chapters cover the expected topics of life history, anatomy, physiology, conservation, and folklore. The chapter entitled "Dragonfly and Damselfly Diversity" presents a brief review of each of the world's 29 families of odonates. Unfortunately, the author has a troubling tendency to present assumptions as proven facts. For example, he states that males in the Calopterygidae, during their courtship displays, float downstream for a few meters in order to demonstrate to the female the speed of the water's movement. While this may be a reasonable assumption, it is

unproven (and would be very difficult to prove). In another case, after discussing the impact of odonate larvae on mosquito larvae (again, some of his points being speculative), the author writes "Adult Odonata also account for large numbers of adult mosquitoes," a statement that is very unclear (but presumably means that adult odonates eat significant numbers of mosquitoes) and unproven. A healthy scientific prudence is generally lacking from the text.

The photographs alone are worth the book's bargain price. Almost all are sharp, well-exposed, very well reproduced, and a treat for the eyes. Curiously, the cover photo is arguably the poorest in the book!

This book is very similar in concept to Jill Silsby's *Dragonflies of the World*, being essentially a condensed version of that fine work. Silsby's text is both more extensive and authoritative, but the photos, though more numerous, do not match the consistent quality in *Dragonflies*. In sum, *Dragonflies* would be a fine and inexpensive addition to any odophile's library — just don't accept everything in the text as Gospel!

Blair Nikula

MARTHA'S VINEYARD SURVEY

Allan Keith and Matt Pelikan

A detailed survey of the odonate species known for Martha's Vineyard was begun in 2003, resulting in the documentation of 51 species, nearly 20 more than had previously been recorded for Dukes County. This project will be continued in future years, but we want to receive from past visitors notes on any species observed, together with precise dates and localities. We believe there may be as many as 20 additional species to be recorded on the island. We also want to receive any notes at all from Noman's Land Island, which is part of the town of Chilmark. Please send any notes or comments to:

keiths@vineyard.net or
P. O. Box 247, Chilmark MA 02535.

Thank you!

DRAGONFLIES OF THE NORTH WOODS

Kurt Mead. 2003. Kollath-Stensaas Publishing. 203 pages. 4½" x 8¼." 200+ color photos. \$18.95.

The newest in the North Woods Naturalist Series, a series of field guides covering the Great Lakes region, this latest addition to the burgeoning list of odonate guides will be of considerable interest to dragonfly watchers in this area: it covers 102 species of dragonflies, 82 of which are recorded from southern New England (and several others from northern New England). Although damselflies are not the focus of the guide, six of the more common species are illustrated on two pages at the end of the species accounts.

The size of the guide is somewhat unorthodox, but makes it readily "pocketable." It is printed on glossy stock and appears to be of durable construction (though I've not yet had an opportunity to put it through a workout in the field).

Twenty-two pages of introductory chapters cover the expected subjects such as dragonfly anatomy, biology, and behavior, observing dragonflies, and how to use the guide. The author writes in a lively, chatty style, and his enthusiasm for his subjects is abundantly evident throughout the text.

The species accounts entail 163 pages and include sections entitled "Description" and "Similar Species," and many (though not all) also have additional sections on "Flight Characteristics," "Hunting Technique," "Mating and Egg Laying," and "Larvae." In most cases there is also a side bar entitled "Nature Notes" which has interesting tidbits of information not covered in the other categories. For each species there is also a phenogram illustrating the flight season, under which is a description of the habitat.

The guide is lavishly illustrated with over 200 color photos, with at least one photo of every species and multiple photos (as many as five) for some species. For many species only the male is illustrated, and in a few cases only the female. Although the photo reproduction is quite good, the quality of the photos

themselves is uneven, some being rather blurry. (In the name of full disclosure, I should reveal that I provided a number of photos for the guide.) However, all of the main photos are reproduced at life size or greater, which means that the salient field characteristics are usually easy to see.

In several species, the sexes are misidentified in the photos: the Riffle Snaketail "male" is actually a female; while the Forcinate Emerald and Williamson's Emerald "females" are actually males.

The Calico Pennant "male" also appears to be a female, albeit a very male-like individual. The only spreadwing illustrated is misidentified: it is a Slender Spreadwing (*Lestes rectangularis*), not a Common Spreadwing (*L. disjunctus*); and, curiously, the one photo of Eastern Forktail (*Ischnura verticalis*) is of a blue female (though is not identified to sex in the caption).

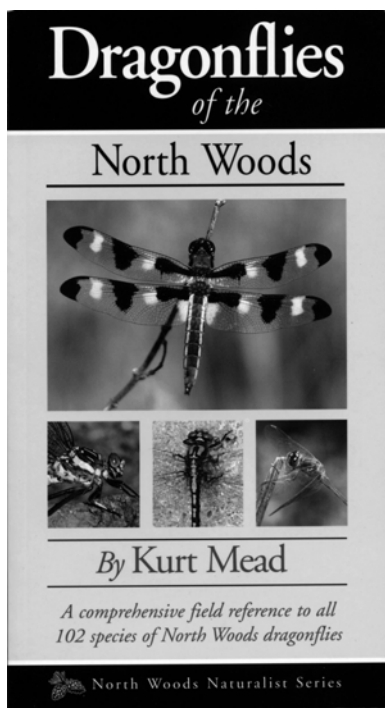
One of my pet peeves in odonate publications in general is the incorrect orientation of photos, most often resulting in vertically perching species such as darners and the large emeralds being portrayed horizontally, which, of course, is very misleading. This is almost always done to facilitate the layout of the book, and while one might excuse this in some publications (though I don't!), it is

inexcusable in a field guide. In this guide, such transgressions occur with the Springtime Darner and the Forcinate Emerald.

The book concludes with a glossary, a checklist, a "phenology flight chart" (a nice addition, which uses bar graphs to show, at a glance, the relative flight seasons of 31 common species), a bibliography, a brief review of binoculars suitable for dragonfly watching, and an index.

Dragonflies of the North Woods is a welcome addition to the growing list of odonate field guides and odophiles in New England will find much of interest within its colorful pages.

Blair Nikula



HUMBOLDT ODONATE COURSE

The Humboldt Institute in eastern Maine will be offering a series of entomology seminars in 2004, including Damselflies and Dragonflies: Systematics and Biomonitoring, May 30 – June 5. This seminar is offered for naturalists and specialists involved with or interested in aquatic insect inventory and biomonitoring. The program will cover several topics in the study of Odonata including their life cycle, morphology, behavior, and species distributions in the Northeast, as well as sampling and preservation techniques. Fieldwork will provide experience in survey methods for all life stages. Lab work will focus on identification, as well as the use and creation of virtual collections using digital images. The course is being taught this year by Frederick H. SaintOurs, who has been documenting and studying Odonata throughout the Northeast and the American tropics for the last seven years. Currently he is developing image-based, web-accessible invertebrate identification tools. For more information phone: 207-546-2821; or visit the Humboldt web site at: www.eaglehill.us/index.html

Ode News

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