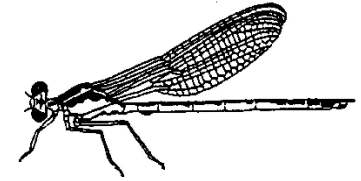


Ode News



An Occasional Newsletter about Dragonflies and Damselflies in Southern New England

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Greetings, and welcome to the 23rd issue of *Ode News*! This issue, devoted almost entirely to highlights from the 2004 season, is tardy reaching you due, in part, to simple inertia, but also because it is becoming increasingly difficult to compile the ever-growing number of interesting odonate reports generated each field season. This is not an unhappy development! An expanding army of observers is generating more and more interesting sightings and if this results in a longer lag in getting the highlights published, it seems a worthwhile price to pay.

There were several odonate surveys funded by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program in 2004. Dave Small spearheaded an effort by the Athol Bird and Nature Club to search for American Rubyspots (*Hetaerina americana*) in the state, Fred SaintOurs conducted surveys for UMBER Shadowdragons (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*), Michael Veit searched for several species of state-listed clubtails, and Blair Nikula compiled a database of past records and looked for new sites for the recently listed Scarlet Bluet (*Enallagma pictum*). Snippets of these surveys' results can be gleaned from the species accounts in this issue's 2004 highlights section. However, we hope to have more complete summaries of some of these surveys in the next issue of *Ode News*.

Arguably the most interesting and exciting project in the state was the continuing and expanded study of odonates on the Connecticut River conducted by Dave McLain, Fred Morrison, and Laurie Sanders, assisted by some new volunteer recruits this year.

The "Big River" hosts no less than seven state-listed species as well as three or more watch-listed species, making it one of the most critical odonate sites in the state. Yet, until recently, almost nothing was known about the ecology or populations of the insects on the river, or of the threats they faced. Dave, Fred, and crew have taken the first significant steps toward

addressing these issues.

In addition to greatly expanding the exuvial surveys they did in previous years, this year they also conducted scuba surveys for larvae along the river bottom as well as laboratory research into larval habitat preferences. Great stuff!

We hope this study will continue well into the future and that we can provide readers with many of the fascinating results.

In addition to the 2004 Massachusetts Highlights, in the following pages you will find a summary of the Rhode Island Atlas season from Ginger Brown, a review of the great new guide *Damselflies of the Northeast*, and announcements of the 2005 DSA meetings, two of which will be held in the Northeast.



Painted Skimmer (*Libellula semifasciata*) — male
This colorful, southern immigrant appeared in unprecedented numbers in 2004, with hundreds moving along the coast during the second week of June.

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2004 MASSACHUSETTS HIGHLIGHTS

Blair Nikula

The 2004 odonate season was a bit late getting started, as extremely wet weather prevailed during the first half of April. When warm southwest winds finally arrived, the first migrant green darners appeared almost immediately with a widespread arrival on April 19. The weather dried out in late April and remained dry through May with somewhat above normal temperatures. This resulted in the emergence of many species earlier than expected. Indeed, many “summer” fliers were out in numbers by mid June, a couple weeks or more early. June was very cool and continued to be dry, though much of the rain seemed to fall on weekends, hindering the efforts of most odonatists. July remained very cool, but with near normal precipitation. August temperatures returned to near normal, while September was warmer than average. The remnants of several tropical systems passed through the region from mid August through September, producing copious rainfall.

One consequence of the growing number of field workers is that the records of state-listed species are, with very few exceptions, increasing apace. There are currently 30 species of odonates on this list and it is becoming clear that many of these are not as rare as once thought. This comes as no surprise, given how poorly known most of these insects were — and still are in most cases. It now appears that several of these state-listed species are strong candidates for delisting, or at least having their status downgraded to a lower level. Among these would be Tule Bluet, Spatterdock Darner, Spine-crowned Clubtail, Zebra Clubtail, Arrow Clubtail, and Mocha Emerald. At the other extreme are those species that continue to be found very infrequently and which do indeed seem to be legitimately rare in the state. These include Subarctic Darner, Midland Clubtail, Rapids Clubtail, Skillet Clubtail, Riverine Clubtail, Forcinate Emerald, Coppery Emerald, Incurvate Emerald, and Kennedy’s Emerald. These are species worthy of increased attention from observers in the upcoming field seasons.

State-listed species that were *not* reported in 2004 included: Subarctic Darner (*Aeshna subarctica*)[T], Rapids Clubtail (*Gomphus quadricolor*)[T], Ski-tailed Emerald (*Somatochlora elongata*)[SC], Forcinate Emerald (*Somatochlora forcipata*)[SC], Coppery Emerald (*Somatochlora georgiana*)[E],

Incurvate Emerald (*Somatochlora incurvata*)[T], and Kennedy’s Emerald (*Somatochlora kennedyi*)[E]. Note that five of the six state-listed *Somatochlores* went unreported this year. Among the missing watch-listed species were Lyre-tipped Spreadwing (*Lestes unguiculatus*), Dusky Dancer (*Argia translata*), Taiga Bluet (*Coenagrion resolutum*), and Lake Darner (*Aeshna eremita*)

Initialed Observers: Earle Baldwin, Bob Bowker, Glenn Corbiere, Chris Gentes, Rick Heil, Lynn Harper, Allen Keith, Julie Lisk, Jennifer Loose, David Ludlow, Jim MacDougall, Dave McLain, Heather McQueen, Fred Morrison, Tom Murray, Blair Nikula, Matt Pelikan, Fred SaintOurs, Anna Santos, Ken Shea, Dave Small, Barbara Spencer, Mike Thomas, Peter Trimble, Michael Veit. Letters in brackets following the species name indicate Massachusetts state-listing designations: [E] = Endangered; [T] = Threatened; [SC] = Special Concern; [WL] = Watch Listed.

Superb Jewelwing (*Calopteryx amata*)[WL]: A single adult was on Pearl Hill Brook in Townsend on 13 June (MV), the easternmost site for this cold-water species in the state. Farther west, one was on the Millers River in Orange on 4 June (DS), four adults were on the Green River in Leyden/Colrain on 22 June (MV), and at least one adult was in Petersham on 10 July (LH *et al.*).

Sparkling Jewelwing (*Calopteryx dimidiata*)[WL]: Two or three adults on the Wading River in Norton on 19 July and 18 August (FSO), and a female on the Three Mile River in Norton on 18 August (FSO), provided new sites for this very local, southern spreadwing. Two adults were on the Squannacook River in Groton on 30 June (MV) and three adults were there on 24 July (BN *et al.*).

American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*)[WL]: The first, a teneral female, was found on the Millers River in Athol (LH, EB) on 8 August. Two days later, 20 were seen along the Connecticut River from Sunderland to Hatfield (TM, CG). “Operation Rubyspot,” conducted by the Athol Bird and Nature Club under the direction of Dave Small, collected reports of this species from 14 river/stream systems in the state, the Ten-Mile River in Attleboro being

the southeastern-most in the state (though the species was apparently recorded historically from Cape Cod). Results from Operation Rubyspot can be viewed on-line at <www.rubyspot.net>.

Blue-fronted Dancer (*Argia apicalis*)[WL]: Outside of its Connecticut River stronghold, this handsome dancer was found on the Merrimack River in North Chelmsford/Tyngsboro where a single adult was seen on 18 July (MV), and on the Blackstone River where four adults were in Northbridge on 30 July (MV) and about 10 adults in Uxbridge on 19 August (LH, JL).

Tule Bluet (*Enallagma carunculatum*)[SC]: Approximately 30 pairs were at Upper Goose Pond in Lee on 25 July (GC) and a single male was at the Littleville Reservoir in Chester on 7 August (GC).



Tule Bluet (*Enallagma carunculatum*) — male
Chester, MA — 7 August 2004

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Attenuated Bluet (*Enallagma daeckii*)[SC]: A new site and first Barnstable County record was provided by a single male caught in Wellfleet on 15 July (KS). Subsequent searches failed to find any others, so it remains to be seen whether a population is present here; this site is about 50 miles from the nearest known population. Elsewhere, ten or more adults were found at a new site in Cohasset on 8 July (FSO), a buttonbush swamp where a stream feeds into a reservoir, a few miles from another recently discovered population. The only other report this year was of a single male on 21 July at a previously known site in New Bedford (BN). There are just ten sites known for this southern bluet in the state, all in the southeast; factors limiting its distribution remain a mystery.

New England Bluet (*Enallagma laterale*)[SC]: The number of reports was down sharply this year. Three adults were at Upper Naukeag Lake in Ashburnham on 30 June (MV), a dozen were at a site in Bourne on

22 June (PT), and the species was found at a coastal plain pond in Falmouth in June (FSO).

Little Bluet (*Enallagma minusculum*)[WL]: A total of three individuals were found on two dates in mid June at a coastal plain pond in Barnstable (BN) and three were at Upper Naukeag Lake in Ashburnham on 30 June (MV).

Scarlet Bluet (*Enallagma pictum*)[T]: Surveys targeting this species turned up four new sites, all coastal plain ponds in the town of Plymouth (BN *et al.*). Another new site was found in Bridgewater where a hundred or more were estimated to be present on 7 July (FSO). The species was also recorded at known sites in Harwich and New Bedford; a large population apparently exists at the latter site where 80+ individuals were present along a rather small segment of the pond shoreline on 21 July (BN). The habitat requirements of this species (as with so many other odonates) remain unclear.

Pine Barrens Bluet (*Enallagma recurvatum*)[T]: A single male was captured at a coastal plain pond in Barnstable on 16 June (BN) and the species was found at another coastal plain pond in Falmouth in June (FSO). No other reports were received, though this presumably reflects a lack of effort in the appropriate habitat during the species' rather short and early flight season.

Citrine Forktail (*Ischnura hastata*): One in Conway on 21 June (MV, LH) provided a very rare inland occurrence for this tiny, elusive damselfly. Singles were also photographed in Bolton, Harvard, and Lancaster in August, and in Rockport on 15 September (TM). In more typical haunts in the southeastern coastal plain, small numbers were found at six sites within the Massachusetts Military Reservation in Bourne during the period 21 June – 10 July (PT).

Spatterdock Darner (*Aeshna mutata*)[SC]: This species was numerous at the Conant Brook Reservoir in South Monson on 20 June when an *Ode News* sponsored walk found many males, an ovipositing female (ovipositing, appropriately, in spatterdock), and a single exuvia (BN, MV, LH *et al.*). This species has rarely been recorded west of the Connecticut River Valley (perhaps due in part to the paucity of coverage in that region), so singles in Chester on 11 June (GC), Cummington on 13 June (BS), and Buckland on 22 June (MV) were noteworthy.

The only other reports were of two in Westhampton on 19 June (FM, BN), and as many as six individuals at three sites in Bourne in late June (PT).

Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*)[SC]: This dramatic dragon was seen at two coastal plain ponds in Myles Standish State Forest in Plymouth during early August (BN *et al.*), at one pond in Barnstable on three dates between mid June and early August (BN *et al.*), at three sites in Bourne in late June (PT), and at one pond in Falmouth on 28 June (FSO). At one of the Plymouth sites on a dreary day with occasional showers, a male was found perched about five feet high on a dead pine just back from the water's edge — the first time any of the several observers had seen this species perched! Most noteworthy, however, was at least one male patrolling a small pond in South Monson, Hampden County, on 20 June (BN *et al.*). Laurie Sanders and Fred Morrison first recorded the species at this site in 1996. The species is very rare away from the southeast coastal plain and no breeding populations are known anywhere near (within 50 miles?) this location. Nonetheless, the presence of patrolling males several years apart is at least suggestive of a viable population. Further investigations of this site and others in the southern Connecticut River Valley are warranted.

Ocellated Darner (*Boyeria grafiana*)[SC]: Early exuviae were found along the Deerfield River in Buckland, Conway, and Deerfield on 21 June (LH, MV). Additional exuviae were found at three sites on the West Branch of the Westfield River in Becket and Chester on 9 August (LH *et al.*), the Middle Branch of the Westfield River in Chester on 9 August (LH *et al.*), Factory Brook in Middlefield on the same date (LH *et al.*), the Deerfield River in Charlemont on 12 September (LH), and the Green River in Greenfield on 12 September (LH *et al.*). The only adult reported was a male netted on the West Branch of the Westfield River in Chester on 9 August (LH *et al.*).

Taper-tailed Darner (*Gomphaeschna antilope*)[WL]: The mysterious appearance of this species among migratory movements of dragonflies on Plum Island in the extreme northeast corner of the state occurred again this year. On 15 June, Rick Heil netted four individuals, found another one road-killed, and saw an additional 20+ *Gomphaeschnas* that were likely this species. No others were reported in the state this year!

Swamp Darner (*Epiaeschna heros*): Other than nine among a migratory movement in Provincetown on 9 June (BN), the B-52 of odonates went unreported.

Spine-Crowned Clubtail (*Gomphus abbreviatus*)[E]: This small, attractive clubtail continues to show up at new sites and clearly is nowhere near as rare as once thought. New sites this year included the Quabog River where both adults and exuviae were found at sites in Palmer and Warren on 30 May and 20 June (MV *et al.*); the Ware River where 10+ adults and over one hundred exuviae were found in Hardwick/New Braintree on 29 May, and two adults and three exuviae were found in Palmer/Ware on 8 June (MV); the Stillwater River in Princeton/Sterling where a single exuviae was found on 27 May (LH); and the Deerfield River in Buckland where one adult female was netted on 21 June (MV). On the Millers River, a single adult was in Erving on 30 May (TM), a dozen or more adults were seen at three sites west of Athol on 4 June, nine adults were in South Athol on 9 June (DS), and exuviae were found in Athol on the late date of 31 July (LH *et al.*) This species is a strong candidate for de-listing.

Beaverpond Clubtail (*Gomphus borealis*)[WL]: New sites for this recently de-listed species included one in Monterey where a male was photographed on 27 May (GC), a beaver pond in New Salem where several males were present on 7 June (DS), a site in Cummington where the species was present on 3 June and later (BS), Cranberry Pond in Sunderland where a male was found on 19 June (BN, MV), the Conant Brook Reservoir in Monson where a female was captured on 20 June (BN *et al.*), and Pearl Hill Brook in Townsend where four adults were present on 13 June (MV).

Harpoon Clubtail (*Gomphus descriptus*)[E]: The only reports this year were of an adult female netted on the Green River in Leyden/Colrain on 21 June (MV), a new site for the species, and of three exuviae on the East Branch of the Westfield River in Cummington on 16 May (MV).

Midland Clubtail (*Gomphus fraternus*)[E]: The first state record of an adult in almost 15 years was provided by a male captured in a small clearing at the base of Mt. Holyoke in Hadley on 26 June (MT). This species, regularly found on the Connecticut River in Connecticut, has proven frustratingly elusive on Massachusetts' portions of the river.

Cobra Clubtail (*Gomphus vastus*)[SC]: This species continued to be numerous on its Connecticut River stronghold (e.g., about 60 males patrolling over the Sunderland stretch of the river on 20 June [BN *et al.*]); exuviae were typically abundant at several sites along the river, though the number found at study sites in Gill and Northfield were below last year's exceptional totals (DM, FM). Additionally, Michael Veit found three teneral adults on the Merrimack River in Tyngsboro on 4 June as well as several dozen exuviae at several sites along the river between Haverhill and the New Hampshire border during the period 4–17 June. The Connecticut and Merrimack are the only riverine systems in the state known to support this species.

Skillet Clubtail (*Gomphus ventricosus*)[SC]: At least a dozen individuals, all apparently young adults, were found near the Connecticut River in Hadley and Hatfield during the period 30 May – 27 June (CG, HM); most of these were perched on vegetation a foot or so above the ground. Although thousands of clubtail exuviae were collected along the Connecticut River this season, very few were this species (DM, FM).

Dragonhunter (*Hagenius brevistylus*): An exuviae found along the upper Taunton River in Bridgewater on 12 June (FSO) provided a first, though not unexpected, record for Plymouth County.

Northern Pygmy Clubtail (*Lanthus parvulus*)[WL]: Two new sites for this scarce clubtail were found: one in Chester where a female was photographed on 30 May (GC), and one in Athol where a male and two females were present on 4 July (EB). A pygmy clubtail photographed in Cummington on 30 May (BS) could not be identified to species, but seems likely to have been this species given the location.

Southern Pygmy Clubtail (*Lanthus vernalis*)[WL]: New sites for this diminutive clubtail included the Conant Brook Reservoir in South Monson where two adults were found on 20 June (BN *et al.*), the Ware River in Palmer/Ware where a single exuviae was found on 30 May (MV), a small brook in Shutesbury where

two young adults and an exuviae were found on 5 June (CG), and the Meanderbrook in Chester where a male was photographed on 30 May (GC). A Northern Pygmy Clubtail was also photographed at this latter site on 30 May, making it the first place in the state where both species of pygmy clubtail have been recorded together.

Brook Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus aspersus*)[SC]: A nymph was found on the Millers River in Winchendon on 10 June (LH), while a single adult was there on 12 June (DS) and another adult was on the Millers in Athol on 3 July (DS). New sites were the Quabog River in Palmer where a single exuviae was found on 30 May (MV), the Ware River in Ware/Palmer where an exuviae was found on 8 June (MV), the Quinapoxet River in Holden where an exuviae was found on 28 June (LH), and the Blackstone River in Northbridge where adults were numerous over riffles on 9 June (MV).

Riffle Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus carolus*)[T]: “Numerous males and females” were seen and photographed on the West Branch of the Westfield River in Chester during the period 29 June – 11 July (GC). Three adults and three larvae were on the East Branch of the Westfield River on 16 May (MV), at least one adult was in Cummington on 29 May (BS), and several adults were on the Deerfield River in Conway/Shelburne on 21 June (MV).

Maine Snaketail

(*Ophiogomphus mainensis*) [WL]: One to three adult males were found at two sites on the Quabog River between Palmer and Warren from 30 May – 20 June (MV *et al.*), one was in Cummington on 30 May (BS), four adults were on the Millers River in Wendell Depot on 4 June (DS, TM), and at least one adult was on the East Branch of the Swift River in Petersham on 10 July (LH, EB, DS). Larvae were in the Nissitissit River in

Pepperell on 8 May (MV), the East Branch of the Westfield River in Cummington on 16 May (MV), and the Green River in Leyden/Colrain on 21 June (MV), while exuviae were found on the Stillwater River in Princeton/Sterling on 27 May (LH) and on



Northern Pygmy Clubtail (*Lanthus parvulus*) — female
Chester, MA — 30 May 2004

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the West Branch of the Westfield River in Becket/Middlefield on 9 August (LH).

Rusty Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus rupinsulensis*)[WL]: Several males, a female, and over two dozen exuviae were found at two sites on the Quabog River on 20 June, one in Palmer and the other in Warren (MV *et al.*). Other adults were on the Blackstone River in Northbridge on 9 June (MV), the Deerfield River in Conway/Shelburne on 21 June (MV), the Ware River in Hardwick on 9 July (MV), and the Ware River in Ware on 10 July (MV). Exuviae were also found on the Ware River on 29 May and 8 June, the Sawmill River in Montague on 22 May (LH), the Stillwater River in Princeton/Sterling on 27 May (LH), the Deerfield River on 21 June and 16 July (LH *et al.*), as well as on the Nashua River in Pepperell/Dunstable on 5 June (MV). The species was again present on the Connecticut River in Sunderland/Deerfield, where several males were patrolling over the shallow riffles on the north end of Second Island on 19 June (BN *et al.*), and was numerous on the Millers River throughout the summer, where the first emergence was noted in Orange and Erving on 21 May (DS, TM) and the last two adults were in Athol on 4 September (DS).

Riverine Clubtail (*Stylurus amnicola*)[E]: One emerging individual photographed on the Connecticut River in Hatfield on 8 August (TM, CG) was apparently the only adult found this year, but a few exuviae were found at various sites along the river during the period 20 June – 8 August (CG, FM, DM). However, the most significant report of this very rare clubtail came from two sites on the Merrimack River in Tyngsboro where a total of eight exuviae were found on 18 July (MV). This is the first record in the state away from the Connecticut River.

Zebra Clubtail (*Stylurus scudderii*)[E]: Lynn Harper's riverine surveys turned up several new sites for this impressive beast, including nymphs and/or exuviae from the Otter River in Winchendon on 11 July, the Deerfield River in Deerfield on 16 July, at two sites on the Sawmill River in Montague on 16

July, the Konkapot River in Sheffield on 28 July, and the Hoosic River in North Adams on 27 September.

Additionally, two adults were on the Ware River in Hardwick/New Braintree on 1 September (MV), yet another new site for the species. Nymphs/exuviae were also on the Squannacook River in Groton on 2 May (MV), at two sites on the Westfield River in Cummington on 9 May (LH), the Fort River in Amherst on 20 May (LH), the Millers River in Winchendon on four dates from 31 May – 17 July (LH), and the Housatonic River in Sheffield on 28 July (LH, EB). Several adult males were on the Mill River in Northampton on the typically late date of 12

September (GC), and small numbers were on the Millers River between Winchendon and Athol during the period 3 August – 13 September (DS, GC *et al.*). This is another strong candidate for de-listing.

Arrow Clubtail (*Stylurus spiniceps*)[T]: This is another species that seems to be turning up all over the place. New sites included the Ware River where single nymphs were found in Ware on 20 May (LH) and in New Braintree on 9 July (MV); the Deerfield River in Deerfield where 11 exuviae were found on 16 July (LH); and the Blackstone River where a single larva was found in Northbridge on 9 June (MV) and three exuviae were found in Uxbridge on 19 August (LH). Additional exuviae/nymphs were found on the Millers River in Athol on 23 July and 30 August (LH *et al.*); at several sites on the Merrimack River between Haverhill and the New Hampshire border during the period 18–25 July (MV); at three sites on the Housatonic river, two in Sheffield on 28 July and one in Stockbridge on 30 July (LH, EB); and at several sites along the Connecticut River where they were numerous as usual during July and August (CG, FM, DM, LH, EB). Up to a dozen males were on the Millers River in Athol 4–13 September (DS, GC) and the species was found again on the Nashua River in Groton/Pepperell on 30 July (MV).

Arrowhead Spiketail (*Cordulegaster obliqua*)[WL]: Two males at Cranberry Pond in Sunderland on 19 June (BN, MV) provided only the second



Riffle Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus carolus*) — male
Chester, MA — 27 June 2004

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record for the Connecticut River Valley. At least six were in Sherborn on 16 June (BB), at a site that appears to host one of the largest populations of this scarce species in the state.

Umbur Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*) [SC]: Fred SaintOurs conducted surveys for this species, adding six new sites, all in eastern Massachusetts. He failed to find the species at several sites in the western half of the state; there are still no records west of the Connecticut River. Three exuviae on the Squannacook River in West Groton on 13 June (TM) provided another new site. In surveys of the Merrimack River, Michael Veit found over 300 exuviae at several sites from Haverhill upriver to the New Hampshire border during the period 7 June – 25 July.

Stygian Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia yamaskanensis*) [SC]: Until recently known only from the Connecticut River, Lynn Harper's diligent riverine searches greatly expanded our understanding of the distribution of this elusive species in the state. Lynn and companions discovered exuviae from several new sites on six river systems. In addition to the Connecticut, the species has now been found on the Millers, Chicopee, Ware, Deerfield, and Housatonic rivers. These rivers range from extremely rocky and fast flowing (e.g., the Deerfield) to muddy bottomed and rather sluggish (e.g., the Connecticut), suggesting that Stygians may be much more of a habitat generalist in Massachusetts than previously thought. Farther north in its range, the species occurs on large lakes as well, though it has yet to be found in such habitats locally.

Mocha Emerald (*Somatochlora linearis*) [SC]: This southern emerald appeared on a couple of occasions in a Norwell backyard in mid July (FSO) and several were captured in a Topsfield backyard between late June and late July (JM *et al.*).

Ebony Boghaunter (*Williamsonia fletcheri*) [E]: Upwards of a dozen, including some teneral, were found at a new site in New Salem on 17 May (DS). At previously known sites, a single female was found in Wendell on 13 May (DS), six adults were in Petersham on 20 May (TM), and one larva was found at a bog in Ashburnham on 1 May (MV). This small, dark denizen of sphagnum bogs is now known from nine sites in Massachusetts, seven of these discovered in just the past five years.

Ringed Boghaunter (*Williamsonia lintneri*) [E]: Numbers of this species were found again in Harvard, where the first was seen on 29 April and many observers enjoyed at least 21 individuals, some teneral, on 1 May (TM). The species was present at this site through the late date of 5 June, when four individuals were still on the wing (TM). A single adult as found at a new site in Westford on 20 May (JL).



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Ringed Boghaunter (*Williamsonia lintneri*) — female
Harvard, MA — 5 June 2004

Martha's Pennant (*Celithemis martha*) [WL]: This small, locally distributed dragon was seen at nine coastal plain ponds in Plymouth and at two on Cape Cod during the period from 10 July to 10 August (BN, KS).

Bar-winged Skimmer (*Libellula axilena*): The third state record for this southern immigrant occurred this year on 10 August, when a male was seen in Attleboro (DL). While the observer was trying to net it, the male coupled with a female! The pair remained in copula briefly then the female began ovipositing, providing the first evidence of breeding in the state. This species was numerous in Rhode Island this summer with breeding confirmed at several sites (see page 9), so it is somewhat surprising more were not found in Massachusetts.

Painted Skimmer (*Libellula semifasciata*): Unprecedented numbers of this colorful southern skimmer appeared this year. The first report was of three individuals on 20 May in Westford (JL), probably a record early date for the state. A major incursion occurred on 9 June when 934 were counted moving along the dunes in Provincetown during 2½ hours in the early afternoon, another 50 were noted at

Crane's Beach in Ipswich (AS), and at least a dozen were seen during casual observations in East Gloucester (RH). No other large movements were reported, but the species remained numerous throughout the eastern half of the state into late summer (e.g., 50 at Donnelly Pond in Bourne on 23 June [PT]), and was found in several locations well inland where it is normally scarce to absent.



Bar-winged Skimmer (*Libellula axilena*) — male
Great Dismal Swamp, VA — June 1999

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Great Blue Skimmer (*Libellula vibrans*): The first state records of this large skimmer since 1999 and the largest influx since 1995 occurred this year. The first report was of two males among a large movement of dragons along the outer beach in Provincetown on 9 June (BN). This was followed by another male among a migratory movement on Plum Island on 15 June (RH). Subsequently, three were at a pool in Bourne on 30 June (PT), a single male was seen in Marshfield on 2 July (DL), two males were found at a puddle in a road in Wellfleet on 17 July (KS), and at this same puddle an ovipositing female and multiple males were seen on 14 August (KS). Another male was at the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary in Topsfield on 7 August (JM), and on Martha's Vineyard at least three individuals were seen during the period 28 June – 18 August (AK, MP).

Elfin Skimmer (*Nannothemis bella*)[WL]: Four adults were at a bog in Ashburnham on 30 June (MV), and five were in a seepage area in Westhampton on 19 June (FM, BN).

Spot-winged Glider (*Pantala hymenaea*): Although this species arrived very early (probably record early) with the observation of two at Plum Island on 11 May (RH), and hundreds were present on the outer Cape a few days later (see below), the species otherwise seemed much scarcer than usual with surprisingly few among coastal dragonfly movements in June.

Carolina Saddlebags (*Tramea carolina*): One at Cambourne Pond in Rockport on 9 June (RH) furnished a long-overdue first for Essex County, while one in Ludlow on 14 July (GC) was a very rare inland sighting for this southern, coastal plain species.

Migratory Movements: Only a few migratory movements were detected this year, and all were of northbound insects in the late spring – early summer period. The first movement occurred on the early date of 15 May when hundreds of Spot-winged Gliders were seen along the ocean side of Wellfleet on Cape Cod (KS).

The next movement, and apparently the only observed movement of any magnitude, was on 9 June, a flight dominated by Painted Skimmers.

From 12:30 to 3:00 p.m., at Race Point in Provincetown, Blair Nikula counted over 1000 dragons, 934 of them Painted Skimmers. Other species noted in this flight included 85 Common Green Darners (including 6 tandem pairs), 9 Swamp Darners, 16 Twelve-spotted Skimmers, 2 Great Blue Skimmers, 30 (only) Spot-winged Gliders, 11 Carolina Saddlebags and 4 Black Saddlebags (including one tandem pair). Rick Heil also noted substantial numbers of dragons moving past Cape Ann in East Gloucester on this date. Although he was working and unable to make systematic counts, Rick estimated that he saw several hundred individuals, the most common being Common Green Darners, Twelve-spotted Skimmers, and Painted Skimmers, with lesser numbers of Spot-winged Gliders and Black Saddlebags. Finally, Anna Santos reported 50+ Painted Skimmers moving along Crane Beach in Ipswich on the 9th, but made no mention of other species.

Modest numbers of migrants were present on Plum Island in Essex County on 15 June, though no obvious movement was apparent. Totals included 25 Common Green Darners, 5+ Taper-tailed Darners (plus another 20+ that were probably this species), 8 Twelve-spotted Skimmers, 21 Painted Skimmers, one Great Blue Skimmer, 2 Wandering Gliders, 40+ Spot-winged Gliders, and 9 Black Saddlebags (RH).

Finally, hundreds of dragonflies, of unknown species, were seen along the south shore of Chatham on 3 July (D.Scott). Although huge numbers of migrants were seen in Rhode Island in early September, southbound movements in Massachusetts, if they occurred, passed undetected this year.

RHODE ISLAND ODONATE ATLAS: 2004 SUMMARY

Virginia Brown

The final year of the Rhode Island Odonata Atlas will forever be remembered as the year of the southern dragonflies. Two king skimmers with southern distribution, previously scarce here, were found in large numbers during the summer of 2004, as they were in other parts of southern New England. Bar-winged Skimmers (*Libellula axilena*) and Great Blue Skimmers (*Libellula vibrans*) moved into our area in June. Prior to this year, there was only one record for each in Rhode Island: 1995 for *L. axilena* and 1996 for *L. vibrans*. In 2004, however, Great Blue Skimmers were recorded in 13 townships at 13 different locations and Bar-winged Skimmers were recorded in 11 townships at 12 different locations. Reproductive behavior was observed in both species at numerous sites. However many of the vernal pools dried up after eggs were laid, so we wonder how successful these events will be. We certainly hope these species will become regular members of our fauna in future years.

Despite the abundance of the two southern king skimmers, Taper-tailed Darners (*Gomphaeschna antilope*), another southern species, were scarce in 2004. Only a few animals were observed in two different locations. Coppery Emeralds (*Somatochlora georgiana*) were again observed in large numbers in South Kingstown, and new populations were found in Coventry and Burrillville in the higher elevations along our northern and western borders.

Spring inventory of Ringed Boghaunters (*Williamsonia lintneri*) produced two new sites for this early flying fen-dwelling dragonfly, one each in Johnston and Woonsocket, bringing the total number of breeding sites in Rhode Island to 29. What is most interesting about the two new wetlands is that both are in relatively urban environments with only small areas of forest cover remaining. The Johnston wetland is literally perched on the edge of the most developed area in the state, immediately adjacent to a major interstate, and within the commercial, industrial, and residential sprawl of the Providence area.

The second new Ringed Boghaunter site, in Woonsocket, also supports substantial populations of Spatterdock Darner (*Aeshna mutata*) and Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*), both new discoveries in 2004. These two stunning insects were on the wing at

the same time, patrolling the patches of floating and emergent vegetation, making for a wild and colorful day in the field. In addition, this Woonsocket pond is one of the most diverse odonate sites in the state, with more than 50 species present, and many bog and fen dwellers in residence. These include American Emerald (*Cordulia shurtleffii*), Hudsonian Whiteface (*Leucorrhinia hudsonica*), Red-waisted Whiteface (*L. proxima*), Four-spotted Skimmer (*Libellula quadrimaculata*), Painted Skimmer (*L. semifasciata*), and large populations of both Sphagnum and Sedge Sprites (*Nehalennia gracilis* and *N. irene*). The mosaic darner diversity and richness at this Woonsocket pond are remarkable, with large numbers of Mottled Darners (*Aeshna clepsydra*), Lance-tipped Darners (*A. constricta*), Black-tipped Darners (*A. tuberculifera*), and Green-striped Darners (*A. verticalis*) all battling for turf and water at once. Magnificent communal egg-laying events of Black-tipped Darners were observed at this pond, with clusters of females hunkered down in the sedges and agitated males skulking about in search of mates.

Spatterdock Darners (*Aeshna mutata*) had a big year in Rhode Island, with six new sites recorded in seven townships (the Woonsocket pond described above straddles two townships), doubling the number of known locations for this species.

Surveys of river species produced intriguing results in 2004. Arrow Clubtails (*Stylurus spiniceps*) were found in a third location on the Blackstone River, in North Smithfield, only a few hundred yards from the Massachusetts line. The three sites for *S. spiniceps*



© Glenn Corbiere

Arrow Clubtail (*Stylurus spiniceps*) - male
Athol, MA — 13 September 2004

on the Blackstone encompass five miles of river, but it may not occur continuously over this distance. Downstream on the Blackstone, in Lincoln and Cumberland, the largest population we have seen of this species occurs in the rapids below a dam on algae-covered rock and cobble substrate. The species is well established here in water of poor quality that has not yet improved to the “swimmable” category. Zebra Clubtails (*Stylurus scudleri*) were found in a second stream in Burrillville, bringing the total number of streams with this species in Rhode Island to five.

Several new populations of the beautiful American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*) were documented in 2004 on urban stretches of two Rhode Island rivers (in Warwick/West Warwick and Pawtucket) where little or no riparian buffer remains. Not only was the species present at these urban sites, it was present in very large numbers and apparently thriving in less than pristine conditions.

Inventory for Brook Snaketails (*Ophiogomphus aspersus*) has yet to produce the species outside of two streams in the Pawcatuck watershed. This species is proving to be extremely limited in occurrence in Rhode Island. Unlike other clubtails of clean, forested streams, including the Zebra Clubtail, Maine Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus mainensis*), and Spine-crowned Clubtail (*Gomphus abbreviatus*), the Brook Snaketail has not been found in any additional streams or watersheds other than the Pawcatuck. The Pawcatuck watershed is Rhode Island’s healthiest watershed, with headwater streams flowing through thousands of acres of conservation land or intact forest. Additionally, due to their geologic history, the

rivers and streams of the Pawcatuck Watershed have extensive clean sand deposits, which are preferred by larvae of Brook Snaketails.

Two new populations of the mighty Arrowhead Spiketail (*Cordulegaster obliqua*) were found in 2004, thereby doubling the number of known sites in the state. One of these populations appears to be quite large, as at least 10 individuals of both sexes were observed flying and perching in sunny slash areas in mixed pine-oak woodland.

On September 11, 2004, right after a cold front and tropical system passage, one of the largest dragonfly migrations we have seen took place along our south coastal beaches. Movements were observed in Little Compton and South Kingstown where thousands of Common Green Darners (*Anax junius*) passed by in a few hours time. Great waves of darners rose up from the dunes, pausing to swirl and feed, then spun off to the south and west along the coast. Also present in this spectacular migration were large numbers of Black Saddlebags (*Tramea lacerata*), smaller numbers of Carolina Saddlebags (*T. carolina*) and Wandering Gliders (*Pantala flavescens*), and a few Blue Dashers (*Pachydiplax longipennis*). Several other observers reported large numbers of *Anax junius* along the coast that day. Numbers were so great on the Little Compton beach that sunbathers were noticing the phenomenon. One worried beachgoer even likened it to “Armageddon in miniature”.

With the final field season of the Rhode Island Odonata Atlas complete, we are moving forward with data analysis and preparation of our final publication, to be published by the Rhode Island Natural History Survey in partnership with The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island. Quality control of our database (now numbering over 14,000 records) was finished in the winter of 2003-2004, and approximately 1100 collecting sites were mapped on USGS quad maps. These sampling points were electronically mapped during the summer of 2004. We are also moving forward with the effort analysis from the Atlas, entering minutes/hours of observation (directly from volunteer and staff data sheets) for each collecting site into the computer. This will allow us to analyze how much effort (e.g., field time) was spent not only at the township level, but also at the site level. We expect to have the Rhode Island Odonata Atlas publication in press by fall of 2005. Stay tuned for more from Rhode Island!



Brook Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus aspersus*) — male
Amherst, NH

© 2004 Tom Murray

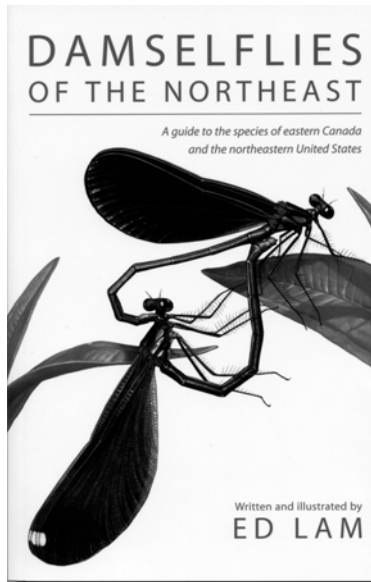
DAMSELFLIES OF THE NORTHEAST

Ed Lam. 2004. *Biodiversity Books, Forest Hills, NY*. 96 pages. 5½" x 8½." 300+ illustrations and photos. \$20.00.

The bar has been raised! This new, full-color field guide, written and illustrated (beautifully) by Ed Lam, is quite simply the finest and most attractive field guide yet to appear in North America.

The guide covers almost 70 species (and subspecies) with a geographic coverage extending from Virginia and eastern Ohio northeastward to the Maritime Provinces. Each species receives a full page and there is a page or two of introduction illustrated with color photos for each family as well as for the major genera.

Both males and females are illustrated for every species, with dorsal and lateral views of the males. Additionally, any color forms are illustrated where appropriate (e.g., many of the female *Enallagma*s). The illustrations are several times life-size, making subtle markings easily seen. Also, for each species a life-sized silhouette (dorsal view) shows the actual size. A black-and-white drawing shows the male appendages, except in the few instance where that feature is irrelevant to identification. In many cases, there are also illustrations (some color, some black-and-white) of various features critical to identification. The illustrations are, without exception, exquisite – both color and proportion being flawless to my eye.



Although clearly geared to field identification, the author is well aware that not all species/sexes are identifiable in the field and is commendably quick to caution the reader in such cases. For each species and sex, a small icon at the top right corner of the page indicates whether the species/sex can be identified in the field (a binocular icon), in the hand (a magnifying glass icon), or only under high magnification (a microscope icon) – a clever and useful feature.

Range maps are presented with each species accounts, showing the range at the county level within the book's geographic scope. Although the maps are small (1¼" x 1½"), they adequately illustrate where each species has, or has not, been found.

Damselflies of the Northeast was a labor of love by Ed Lam, and his skill and attention to detail are apparent on every page. One minor typo is the only flaw I have been able to find in the book. The guide is the first to be published by Biodiversity Press, a new, non-profit organization devoted to the production of regional natural history field guides. They have made an auspicious debut!

The guide is very reasonably priced at \$20.00 and can be ordered from <homepage.mac.com/edlam/book.html>. Order a copy or two (one for the car, one for the bookshelf) today. You should not be without it next field season!

Blair Nikula

2005 DSA MEETINGS

The Dragonfly Society of the Americas will be holding their 2005 national meeting in Arnprior, Ontario (about 25 miles west of Ottawa) 8–12 July. Arnprior is situated on the Ottawa River and offers the possibility of Elusive Clubtail (*Stylurus notatus*), Midland Clubtail (*Gomphus fraternus*), Horned Clubtail, (*Arigomphus cornutus*), Extra-striped Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus anomalus*), Broad-bodied Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia michaeli*), and Stygian Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia yamaskanensis*). Details can be viewed online at <www.afn.org/~iori/oinevent.html#DSA2005>.

The DSA's 2005 northeast regional meeting will be in State College, Pennsylvania 9–12 June. The location is near Ten Acre Pond, a site that has received 50 years of continuous odonate surveys, a record of longevity unsurpassed in North America. Some 85 species have been recorded at this site. Long-time odonatologist Hal White is hosting the meeting. Details are online at <www.udel.edu/chem/white/TAP.html>.

THANKS! (AND APOLOGIES)

We have been remiss over the years in not publicly acknowledging the many contributions we have received in support of *Ode News*, and we'd like to apologize and make a feeble attempt to rectify that.

Dick Walton has been especially generous in his support over the years, both financially and spiritually, as have Fred Morrison and Laurie Sanders. Others who have provided support above and beyond — financial or otherwise — include Nicholas Skinner, Lynn Harper, Nancy Goodwin, Jean Held, Glenn Corbiere, George Gove, Bryan Pfeiffer, Ann DeGross, Bob & Dee Parks, Steve Ivas, Jennifer Loose, Jim & Stina MacDougall, Ginger Brown, Dave Small, Michael Veit, and Hugh Willoughby.

And last, but certainly not least, thanks and kudos to the burgeoning number of eager, enthusiastic naturalists who hurl themselves into muck and mire from one end of the state to the other, and who take the time to record and report their observations — this missive depends upon your remarkable dedication!

Ode News

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