

Ode News - An Occasional Newsletter for Dragonfly Enthusiasts in Southeastern Massachusetts

Volume II, Number 2 - August, 1995

Greetings! Welcome to the fifth issue of Ode News. We continue to be stunned and delighted by the burgeoning interest in dragonflies and this modest newsletter. In the last issue we expressed our amazement over the growth of our mailing list to over 50 names. Well, three short, hectic months later that list has skyrocketed to almost 130! Welcome to all our new readers, and thanks to those who sent contributions to help defray our expenses. We hope you will find Ode News informative, and that you will be inspired to spend more time afield enjoying these marvelous creatures.

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Highlights: May - July, 1995

The overwhelming feature of the season to date has been the extremely low water levels - in striking contrast to last year. Precipitation through the first half of 1995 was several inches below normal, leaving virtually all ponds dramatically low. Many of the smaller pools that were hotbeds of dragonfly activity throughout 1994, were nothing more than muddy quagmires by mid-July this year. What impact this has had, or will have, on odonate populations we cannot yet say, but certainly some species must be negatively affected. However, these insects have been adapting to such fluctuating conditions for eons, so such changes, at least in the short term, are probably not of great concern. Indeed, some species may actually benefit from the lower water levels.

Swamp Darner (*Epiaeschna heros*) - Certainly the dragon of early summer was the Swamp Darner. A remarkable, perhaps unprecedented flight of this large darner occurred on the outer Cape in early June. See Jackie Sones' story about this exciting event elsewhere in this issue.

Great Blue Skimmer (*Libellula vibrans*) - The only previous Cape record of this large, southern skimmer was a single specimen collected by Ginger Carpenter on 5 July 1990 in Dennis. This year, among the dragonfly movements in Provincetown in early June there were a number of this supposedly sedentary species (again see Jackie Sones' accompanying article for more details). Later in the month, Jeremiah Trimble discovered at least three individuals on the Mashpee River in Mashpee. Jeremiah provides an account of his discovery on page 6.

Spatterdock Darner (*Aeshna mutata*) - This state-listed species again appeared at the "Frosted" Pool in Eastham. Our first observation of this beautiful blue darner was not until 17 June, 11 days later than last year. On 3 July, a specimen was unintentionally obtained and its identity subsequently confirmed by Paul Miliotis. Although there are several other pools of varying size within a half mile or so, we have yet to detect this species anywhere but the "Frosted" Pool and, on just a couple of occasions, the nearby uplands. Nor have we yet seen a female (to our knowledge) or any breeding activity (e.g. pairs in tandem or oviposition). Nonetheless, the persistent (at least three years now) presence of patrolling males strongly suggests that an apparently small breeding population exists at this fragile site. Water levels at the "Frosted" Pool have been very low this year, and we would not be surprised to see it dry up completely by summer's end. Many questions remain about this elusive, mysterious dragon.

Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*) - This magnificent, state-listed species was found again at several of its traditional sites from Barnstable to Eastham, as well as a couple of new ones: Clay Pond in Dennis and Great Pond in Provincetown. At Clay Pond, two males and an ovipositing female were seen on 8 July. A single male at Great Pond on 15 July apparently represents the first Cape record north of Eastham.

Lyre-tipped Spreadwing (*Lestes unguiculatus*) - A single male of this small spreadwing was caught at a vernal pool near the west entrance to the Otis military reservation in Bourne on 18 July by Jeremiah Trimble. Another male was found at the "Frosted" Pool in Eastham on 30 July. To our knowledge, the only previous Cape record for this species was by Robert & Sarah Gibbs who found the species at Ashumet Pond in Falmouth in 1953.

Big Bluet (*Enallagma durum*) - Of the 15 species of bluets recorded on the Cape this season this, the largest of the genus, was the most noteworthy. Jackie Sones and Jeremiah Trimble found a number of Big Bluets on 11 July at Nobska Pond in Woods Hole, a site where Chris Leahy collected the species almost 20 years ago. Two days later Jeremiah found more *durums* at Mill Pond in Yarmouth. This essentially southern bluet inhabits brackish habitats along the coast. Although not recorded by Ginger Carpenter during the 1980s or the Gibbs in the 1950s, the species is known from a number of sites elsewhere in southeastern Massachusetts and will likely prove to be a locally common species on the Cape.

Rambur's Forktail (*Ischnura ramburii*) - One male and one female of this relatively large southern forktail were found by Peter and Jeremiah Trimble on Cuttyhunk Island on 23 July. This species appears to be a rare and local inhabitant of brackish habitats in southeastern Massachusetts. It is very similar in appearance to the abundant and widespread Eastern Forktail (*Ischnura verticalis*).

Several species seemed to be present this year in noticeably greater or lesser numbers than last year. Very much on the plus side was **Bog Bluet** (*Enallagma aspersum*) which was found in abundance at a number of sites this year, most notably at Great Pond in Provincetown where 2000 were estimated to be present on 15 July. **Amber-winged Spreadwings** (*Lestes eurinus*) also seemed much more evident this year; we failed to record the species at all last year (though our inexperience with the genus may have resulted in our overlooking them), but found good numbers at several sites this year. On the down side, no **Harlequin Bog Darners** (*Gomphaeschna furcillata*) or **Frosted Whitefaces** (*Leucorrhinia frigida*) were found this year, the second consecutive year the latter species has been missed on the Cape. **Rainpool gliders** (*Pantala* spp.) seemed scarcer this June than last but were being widely seen by mid-July, and a large incursion took place during the heat wave in late July. Look for more on this flight of *Pantalas* in the next issue.

First Sightings - 1995

The following table lists the dates and locations of the first sightings for each of the 74 odonates recorded on Cape Cod through the end of July.

Species	Date	Location
damselfly species	23 April	"Frosted" Pool, Eastham
Common Green Darner (<i>Anax junius</i>)	23 April	Israel's Pond, Barnstable
Eastern Forktail (<i>Ischnura verticalis</i>)	4 May	"Frosted" Pool, Eastham
Four-spotted Skimmer (<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>)	4 May	vernal pools, Eastham
Dot-tailed Whiteface (<i>Leucorrhinia intacta</i>)	6 May	"Superspot", E. Harwich
Blue Corporal (<i>Libellula deplanata</i>)	6 May	"Superspot", E. Harwich
Fragile Forktail (<i>Ischnura posita</i>)	14 May	Grassy Pond, E. Falmouth
Northern Bluet (<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>)	17 May	"Tree Frog" Pond, Brewster
White Corporal (<i>Libellula exusta</i>)	17 May	"Tree Frog" Pond, Brewster
Stream Cruiser (<i>Didymops transversa</i>)	23 May	Punkhorn, Brewster
Bog Bluet (<i>Enallagma aspersum</i>)	27 May	"Frosted" Pool, Eastham
Lancet Clubtail (<i>Gomphus exilis</i>)	27 May	Punkhorn, Brewster
Common Baskettail (<i>Epithea cynosura</i>)	27 May	vernal pools, Eastham
Aurora Damsel (<i>Chromagrion conditum</i>)	28 May	near Quashnet River, Mashpee
New England Bluet (<i>Enallagma laterale</i>)	28 May	Washburn Pond, Mashpee

Springtime Darner (<i>Basiaeschna janata</i>)	28 May	near Deep Pond, Falmouth
Painted Skimmer (<i>Libellula semifasciata</i>)	28 May	Run Pond, Dennis
Amber-winged Spreadwing (<i>Lestes eurinus</i>)	30 May	vernal pools, Eastham
Eastern Pondhawk (<i>Erythemis simplicicollis</i>)	30 May	vernal pools, Eastham
White-spangled Skimmer (<i>Libellula cyanea</i>)	30 May	vernal pools, Eastham
Little Bluet (<i>Enallagma minisculum</i>)	1 June	Grassy Pond, E. Falmouth
Pine Barrens Bluet (<i>Enallagma recurvatum</i>)	1 June	Oliver's Pond, E. Harwich
Swamp Darner (<i>Epiaeschna heros</i>)	1 June	Wellfleet Harbor
Violet-masked Glider (<i>Tramea carolina</i>)	1 June	Black Pond, E. Harwich
Common Whitetail (<i>Libellula lydia</i>)	2 June	High Head, N. Truro
Great Blue Skimmer (<i>Libellula vibrans</i>)	2 June	Race Point, Provincetown
Eastern Red Damsel (<i>Amphiagrion saucium</i>)	5 June	Quashnet River, Mashpee
Prince Baskettail (<i>Epithea princeps</i>)	6 June	Race Point, Provincetown
Wandering Glider (<i>Pantala flavescens</i>)	6 June	Race Point, Provincetown
Spot-winged Glider (<i>Pantala hymenaea</i>)	6 June	Race Point, Provincetown
Black-mantled Glider (<i>Tramea lacerata</i>)	6 June	Race Point, Provincetown
Variable Dancer (<i>Argia fumipennis</i>)	10 June	Run Pond, Dennis
Atlantic Bluet (<i>Enallagma doubledayi</i>)	10 June	Israel's Pond, Barnstable
Calico Pennant (<i>Celithemis elisa</i>)	10 June	Israel's Pond, Barnstable
Martha's Pennant (<i>Celithemis martha</i>)	10 June	Run Pond, Dennis
Golden-winged Skimmer (<i>Libellula auripennis</i>)	10 June	Israel's Pond, Barnstable
Vesper Bluet (<i>Enallagma vesperum</i>)	15 June	Twinnings Pond, S. Orleans
Blue Dasher (<i>Pachydiplax longipennis</i>)	15 June	"Frosted" Pool, Eastham
Swamp Spreadwing (<i>Lestes vigilax</i>)	16 June	Beech Forest, Provincetown
Comet Darner (<i>Anax longipes</i>)	16 June	Israel's Pond, Barnstable
Citrine Forktail (<i>Ischnura hastata</i>)	17 June	vernal pools, Eastham
Spatterdock Darner (<i>Aeshna mutata</i>)	17 June	vernal pools, Eastham
Ebony Jewelwing (<i>Calopteryx maculata</i>)	18 June	Quashnet River, Mashpee
Turquoise Bluet (<i>Enallagma divigans</i>)	18 June	Quashnet River, E. Falmouth
Skimming Bluet (<i>Enallagma geminatum</i>)	18 June	Child's River Pond, E. Falmouth
Orange Bluet (<i>Enallagma signatum</i>)	18 June	Child's River Pond, E. Falmouth
Twelve-spotted Skimmer (<i>Libellula pulchella</i>)	18 June	Quashnet River, Mashpee
Common Sanddragon (<i>Progomphus obscurus</i>)	19 June	Baker's Pond, Dennis

Banded Pennant (<i>Celithemis fasciata</i>)	19 June	Baker's Pond, Dennis
Common/Sweetflag Spreadwing (<i>Lestes disjunctus/forcipatus</i>)	22 June	"Frosted" Pool, Eastham
Sphagnum Sprite (<i>Nehalennia gracilis</i>)	22 June	"Carpe Diem" Bog, Mashpee
Sedge Sprite (<i>Nehalennia irene</i>)	22 June	"Carpe Diem" Bog, Mashpee
Petite Emerald (<i>Dorocordulia lepida</i>)	22 June	Punkhorn, Brewster
Slaty Skimmer (<i>Libellula incesta</i>)	22 June	"Mourning" Pool, Eastham
Sweetflag Spreadwing (<i>Lestes forcipatus</i>)	24 June	Israel's Pond, Barnstable
Common Bluet (<i>Enallagma civile</i>)	24 June	Cliff Pond, Brewster
Ruby Meadowfly (<i>Sympetrum rubicundulum</i>)	24 June	"Frosted" Pool, Eastham
Stream Bluet (<i>Enallagma exsulans</i>)	1 July	Mashpee Pond, Mashpee
Needham's Skimmer (<i>Libellula needhami</i>)	2 July	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
Slender Spreadwing (<i>Lestes rectangularis</i>)	3 July	Old Swamp, S. Orleans
Slender Bluet (<i>Enallagma traviatum</i>)	3 July	Herring Pond, Wellfleet
Lilypad Forktail (<i>Ischnura kellicotti</i>)	3 July	Trout Pond, Chatham
Eastern Amberwing (<i>Perithemis tenera</i>)	3 July	Herring Pond, Wellfleet
Seaside Dragonlet (<i>Erythrodiplax berenice</i>)	5 July	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
Scarlet Bluet (<i>Enallagma pictum</i>)	6 July	"Flowing" Pond, Marstons Mills
Halloween Pennant (<i>Celithemis eponina</i>)	7 July	vernal pools, Eastham
Clamp-tipped Emerald (<i>Somatochlora tenebrosa</i>)	10 July	near Lumbert's Pond, Mars. Mills
Big Bluet (<i>Enallagma durum</i>)	11 July	Nobska Pond, Wood's Hole
Swift River Cruiser (<i>Macromia illinoiensis</i>)	15 July	Horseleech Pond, Truro
Spotted Spreadwing (<i>Lestes congener</i>)	18 July	vernal pool, Bourne
Lyre-tipped Spreadwing (<i>Lestes unguiculatus</i>)	18 July	vernal pool, Bourne
Yellow-legged Meadowfly (<i>Sympetrum vicinum</i>)	18 July	vernal pool, Bourne
Fawn Darner (<i>Boyeria vinosa</i>)	23 July	near Simmons Pond, Dennis
Saffron-bordered Meadowfly (<i>Sympetrum costiferum</i>)	27 July	Gould's Pond, Orleans
Black-shouldered Spinylegs (<i>Dromogomphus spinosus</i>)	31 July	Punkhorn, Brewster

Swamp Darners and Dragonfly Flights in Provincetown

by Jackie Sones

The Swamp Darner (*Epiaeschna heros*) is one of the largest dragonflies in North America, reaching total length of 3 inches. Ginger Carpenter describes this dragon as a "glorious beast, with ocean blue eyes, bright green stripes on the brown thorax and very fine green rings on the abdomen." An amber wash across the wings is also apparent. Refer, if you can, to the cover and photograph on page 31 in Dunkle's *Dragonflies of the Florida Peninsula, Bermuda, and the Bahamas*. They are impressive insects!!!

Prior to this year, the Swamp Darner was thought to be a rare species on Cape Cod. A few individuals had been seen in scattered locations across the Cape, from Falmouth to Wellfleet. For example, one was caught by Ginger Carpenter in South Wellfleet on 20 July 1990, and another was seen by Jeremiah Trimble, Blair Nikula, and Jackie Sones in East Falmouth on 30 August 1994.

On 2 June 1995, over 2000 Swamp Darners were observed near Race Point in Provincetown. A flight of this magnitude had not been recorded anywhere in the northeast before! A second dragonfly flight on 6 June 1995 involved fewer individuals, but a much greater diversity of species. A description of these two flights follows.

1 June 1995. The excitement began at approximately 2:00 p.m. Two Swamp Darners flew up underneath the eaves of a boat in Wellfleet Harbor, and one other individual was spotted flying low over the water in a southwesterly direction. Then, while waiting for pizza near High Head in North Truro, Blair Nikula and I counted over 20 large dragons from about 5:40 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. All were identified as Swamp Darners, except one which was most likely a glider (*Pantala* sp.). Their flight direction was from northeast to southwest, into the prevailing winds, which were blowing at approximately 15-20 mph.

We continued counting until 8:02 p.m., and reached a total of 268! We were bewildered by that number, and the questions began: Where were they coming from? Where were they going? Would there be more tomorrow? Would they be roosting nearby? Would it be possible to find some in the morning?

2 June 1995. At 6:52 a.m., while walking Race Point beach in Provincetown, I saw one Swamp Darner flying toward the dunes. I had found Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) in the wrack line here before, and wondered if there might be any dragons today. I was looking amongst the seaweeds, when a second darner passed me, flying about three feet off the ground in a southwesterly direction. I counted 12 more individuals within 15 minutes, but had noticed others flying along the foredune, so moved up the beach, sat on top of the foredune, and faced northeast.

It was now 7:20 a.m. At first Swamp Darners came by to my right or left, in ones or twos. They followed the contours of the dunes, moving just above the tops of the beach grasses. At 8:00 a.m., they started to come by faster, in greater numbers, and seemed to be favoring the outer edge of the foredune. Some flew within one foot of me; often the whirring of wings was audible. From

time to time, I scanned the inner dunes with binoculars, and noticed more dragonflies passing by there.

At 9:33 a.m., the Swamp Darner count was at 2000, and they were still coming strong! Other species seen among the Swamp Darners included at least 9 Common Green Darners (*Anax junius*), 4 Rainpool Gliders (*Pantala* spp., one definitely *P. hymenaea*), and 1 Painted Skimmer (*Libellula semifasciata*). Unfortunately, at this point I had to depart.

At 11:45 a.m., while driving south along Route 6 in Provincetown and Truro, over one hundred large dragons were seen flying across the road from east to west. I collected one of at least 15 roadkilled Swamp Darners. At 2:30 p.m., I returned and picked up two more roadkills.

At 5:30 p.m., I met Blair Nikula at High Head in Truro where he had found Swamp Darners roosting during the late afternoon. We saw several males and a few females, all of which were perched on Pitch Pines (*Pinus rigida*), anywhere from one to 12 feet off the ground. The weather throughout the day consisted of mostly clear skies, a few high clouds, temperatures in the 60s and 70s, and southwest winds of 15-20 mph.

6 June 1995. After hearing a forecast predicting southwest winds, I headed up to Race Point in Provincetown. The skies were clear, temperatures were in the 70s, and winds were blowing from the southwest at 10-15 mph, with some higher gusts. Arriving at 9:00 a.m., I walked down the beach, checking the wrack line for dragons. With binoculars, I scanned the horizon every now and then, and picked up a Swamp Darner flying along the foredune at 9:20 a.m. I returned to the same position as on 2 June, on top of the foredune facing northeast. The following is a progression of the odonate flight seen from 9:20 a.m. until 1:20 p.m.

Species	Times and Numbers of Individuals						Totals
	09:20-10:00	10:00-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-11:30	12:00-12:30	12:30-13:20	
Swamp Darner (<i>Epiaeschna heros</i>)	15	10	33	56	30	10	154
Common Green Darner (<i>Anax junius</i>)	8	4	6	10	8	12	48
Prince Baskettail (<i>Epitheca princeps</i>)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Painted Skimmer (<i>Libellula semifasciata</i>)	6	24	31	11	31	25	128
? Great Blue Skimmer (<i>Libellula vibrans</i>)	0	0	3	5	3	1	12
Rainpool Glider species (<i>Pantala</i> spp.)	2	2	2	1	2	2	11
Black-mantled Glider (<i>Tramea lacerata</i>)	1	0	0	0	1	0	2

<i>Violet-masked Glider</i> (<i>Tramea carolina</i>)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
? Vermilion Glider (<i>Tramea abdominalis</i>)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified dragonfly	1	2	1	0	0	1	5
Totals	33	43	77	83	76	51	363

The following observations were made during the flight:

Some feeding was evident. Several Common Green Darners paused and chased smaller insects. A few Swamp Darners flew by clasping large prey.

There were a few female Common Green Darners, and four pairs of Common Green Darners flying while in tandem.

Three of the rainpool gliders were identified to species: two Spot-winged Gliders (*P. hymenaea*) and one Wandering Glider (*P. flavescens*).

One dancing glider (*Tramea* sp.) was definitely not a Black-mantled Glider (*T. lacerata*) or a Violet-masked Glider (*T. carolina*). The abdomen was a deep wine red. The hindwing spot was very thin, and relatively straight-edged. Based only on pictures in Dunkle's Dragonflies of Florida, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, I leaned towards Vermilion Glider (*T. abdominalis*), a species documented only once before in New England.

The large dragons identified as Great Blue Skimmers (*Libellula vibrans*) had the following characteristics: large size, in flight appearing almost as large as Common Green Darners; a powdery light blue abdomen, this color most like that of mature male Green Jackets (*Erythemis simplicicollis*); very obvious wing markings: dark smudge at tips of wings, small spot at nodus, and a very dark, long stigma. This description is based on eight apparently mature males. Four female types were observed; they showed a brown and cream colored thorax and abdomen, and wing markings similar to those of the males.

All dragons showed a very direct flight, in a southwesterly direction, apparently following the dune ridge. If anyone ever comes across anything like this in the future, please call Jackie (508-349-2615) or Blair (508-432-6348) as soon as possible!

Great Blue Skimmer in Mashpee

by Jeremiah Trimble

On 23 June 1995, while looking for odonates along the Mashpee River in Mashpee, I discovered three dragonflies which I tentatively identified as Great Blue Skimmers (*Libellula vibrans*). That day began, as many others had, around midday just north of Route 28. It was sunny and hot with little wind, a picture perfect ode day! After bushwacking to the river, I began wading downstream toward Route 28. Only five minutes later, I ran into the first of the three *vibrans*. It was a female, of course, making it difficult to identify. The ode flew upstream toward me and perched on top of a fallen tree, just 15 feet away. Through binoculars I observed the following field marks, which I hoped would be diagnostic: obvious large size, a seemingly distinct wing pattern with a black spot halfway out the front of each wing and the tips rounded in black, and a white face. After observing for half a minute, I attempted to catch it. However, before I was even within swinging distance, it flew off into the woods.

Farther downstream, I found a second *vibrans*, this one a male (thank goodness!). Its light blue/gray coloration entirely covering the thorax and abdomen immediately told me that this was something different. It, too, had the same, but bolder wing pattern. This unfamiliar ode also had bright blue eyes and a white face. Every second, I became more certain that this was *Libellula vibrans*. Knowing how rare this ode was on Cape Cod, I made several attempts at catching it. It seemed like it would be easy enough to capture, for it perched repeatedly at heights between four and 18 feet above the water. However, this ode was very wary, and I missed every time. On two occasions, a second male flew in and tried to chase the original male away, but the newcomer couldn't drive him off. They chased each other in big circles which got smaller and smaller until they were only two feet in diameter. These acrobats flew at such high speeds that I couldn't keep my eyes on them. After almost an hour of pure enjoyment, I forced myself away.

That night I called Blair Nikula to tell him what I'd seen. After I read him my field notes, he agreed with my identification. He added that the white face, or so he understood, was a key field mark in distinguishing this from the very similar Slaty Skimmer (*L. incesta*) and Bar-winged Skimmer (*L. axilena*). With this reassurance, I returned the following day to the Mashpee River in hopes of collecting one of the males. This time I was packing some extra fire power, or net power to be specific. I am, of course, referring to my father, Peter, with whose help and a little luck we would leave the river victorious.

We arrived at the river around mid-morning on another beautiful day. After only 15 minutes, some luck kicked in and we spotted a male *vibrans* perched upriver. My father, having admired it for a few minutes, took the first swing. He missed and it flew downstream toward me, perching again. Now it was my turn. Unfortunately, my swing was also off and it fluttered away and landed 13 feet above the river between the two of us. It was facing away from us, so I figured we'd have a good shot if we could reach it. My father got right under it and raised his net to full extension. He was short by about a foot and would have to jump. After taking a deep breath, he went for it. The next thing I heard was the beautiful sound of wings fluttering in the net. It seemed so easy compared to the day before, but then again with a little extra net power and a lot more luck, anything is possible!

Editor's postscript: Later that day, Jeremiah and Peter took the skimmer to Blair Nikula who photographed it and prepared the specimen. Its identity was later confirmed by Paul Miliotis. Jeremiah is entering his senior year at Falmouth High School.

News and "Noduses"

1995 Walks: Four dragonfly walks were scheduled this summer, one in Rhode Island and three in Massachusetts, and all were very successful. We look forward to more next year! A brief synopsis of each follows:

On 17 June, seven eager odonatists showed up for the "2nd Annual **Rhode Island** Odonate Day" on the Wood River in the southwestern corner of the state. Under Ginger Carpenter's expert guidance, 25 species were recorded, including several Cyrano Darners (*Nasiaeschna pentacantha*), three Swamp Darners (*Epiaeschna heros*), at least four of the state-listed Brook Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus aspersus*), one Twin-horned Snaketail (*O. mainensis*), two Twin-spotted Spiketails (*Cordulegaster maculata*), three species of jewelwings: River (*Calopteryx aequabilis*), Sparkling (*C. dimidiata*), and Ebony (*C. maculata*), and the stunning American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*). Swarms of Common Baskettails (*Epitheca cynosura*) along the woodland roads numbered into the hundreds, and were accompanied by dozens of Prince Baskettails (*E. princeps*).

Twelve people gathered on **Cape Cod** on 24 June to view some of the area's coastal plain species. Although the forecast was rather ominous, the weather cooperated fairly well for most of the day and 34 species were tallied. Our first two stops were at two of the more pristine coastal plain ponds in the mid-Cape area where we found most of the odonates characteristic of that specialized habitat. These included two state-listed species: the awesome Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*) and the delicate Pine Barrens Bluets (*Enallagma recurvatum*). Other coastal plain species included Common Sanddragon (*Progomphus obscurus*), Martha's Pennant (*Celithemis martha*), Golden-winged Skimmer (*Libellula auripennis*), and the striking, but poorly named, Violet-masked Glider (*Tramea carolina*). Later in the day, we visited the "Frosted" Pool in Eastham. Although the clouds had thickened considerably, by patiently waiting for the occasional sunny breaks we were eventually rewarded with the appearance of the beautiful Spring Blue Darner (*Aeshna mutata*), our third state-listed species for the day, and a fitting conclusion to the walk.

The walk in **Petersham**, MA, on 22 July, led by Dick Forster and Dick Walton, attracted a mob! Some 20 people turned up 44 species of odonates, highlighted by a new state record! At Tom's Swamp, dragonflies in the sub-family Corduliidae, commonly known as emeralds because of their brilliant green eyes, were numerous over the dirt road that transects the swamp (actually a large, shrubby sphagnum bog). Among the six species of emeralds netted were at least four individuals of the Warpaint Emerald (*Somatochlora incurvata*), a species previously known from northern New England but not Massachusetts! Chris Leahy, who was present on the walk, confirmed the identification. Also present were Clamp-tipped Emerald (*S. tenebrosa*), Walsh's Emerald (*S. walshii* - also known as the Broomtail because of its hairy appendages), Petite

Emerald (*Dorocordulia lepida*), Racket-tailed Emerald (*D. libera*), and American Emerald (*Cordulia shurtleffi*). At Rutland Brook in Petersham, we were entertained by several Dragonhunters (*Hagenius brevistylus*) - a monstrous species! The diminutive Least Clubtail (*Stylogomphus albistylus*) was also found here.

Chris Leahy convened a gathering of 11 enthusiasts on 13 August under brilliant blue skies to survey the **Savoy State Forest** in northwestern Massachusetts. Among the 32 species found was a Variable Darner (*Aeshna interrupta*), many Canada Darners (*A. canadensis*), several Mottled Darners (*A. clepsydra* - apparently the first western Massachusetts record), several Shadow Darners (*A. umbrosa*), and many Ski-tailed Emeralds (*Somatochlora elongata*).

New State Species: In addition to the Warpaint Emerald detailed above, another species new to the state was found this summer. While exploring a small sphagnum bog in Ashburnham on 9 August, Dick Forster netted a blue darner (genus *Aeshna*) which he did not recognize. After keying out the specimen that evening, he concluded that it was a Muskeg Darner (*Aeshna subarctica*), an identification later confirmed by Chris Leahy. The species previously was known in New England only from Maine! At the same site, Jeremiah Trimble caught a second Muskeg Darner on 12 August and Dick returned and caught a male and female on 17 August, indicating that the species is more than simply a stray to the area. Although compared to most states Massachusetts has an odonate fauna that has been relatively well- studied for the past 100 years, the discovery of two new state records in three weeks illustrates that much remains to be learned.

Odes on the Internet: Readers who are using the Internet may wish to contact the Odonata Information Network (OIN), a source of information on odonates, events, organizations, etc. Recent offerings include a list of North American odonates (including proposed common names) by Dennis Paulson and Sidney Dunkle, and a lengthy discussion of techniques for capturing dragonflies. Internet surfers can reach OIN through the world wide web at: <http://www.afn.org/~iori/>. (Non-surfers can get a copy of the North American odonate list by sending a S.A.S.E., with \$.55 postage, to Ode News at the address below.)

Ode News

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