

The Ohio Dragon-Flyer

Newsletter of the Ohio Odonata Society

October 2021

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Dragonhunters



Little Blue Dragonlet. Photo: Nina Harfmann

Little Blue Dragonlet – Nina Harfmann describes her discovery of a Little Blue Dragonlet, extending the recorded range of this species within Ohio:

I had set a goal for the year of finding the Yellow-sided Skimmer and had several locations in mind based upon searches of Google maps and what I knew to be the appropriate habitat. And, of course, the day was hot and the habitat dry and parched. I left my car in a parking lot some distance from the location, so that I could slip back into the site unnoticed. (I had actually received permission from the site owner for access, but didn't want my car to cause any curiosity.)

I immediately knew that I was in a very special location because there were Eastern Red Damselflies in the reeds as soon as I stepped from my vehicle. Walking through the site, I was impressed by the largest number of Painted Skimmers that I'd ever seen. There were also Seepage Dancers, so I knew the possibility for other rare species was very real. I carried my camera as I always do just in case something unusual comes across my path. For the most part, it was Seepage Dancers, Painted Skimmers, Widow Skimmers and Spread-wing Damselflies. But the opportunity to be in such an unusual place made me want to stay longer and just soak it in. Within the area there was a marshy area

where the seep actually kept the water table quite high. And there was also a lake where I could sit and look out over the area. It was incredibly hot and dry temperature probably close to 90 and in such an open dry area feeling every bit like the surface of the sun. Probably it was good that I stayed and rested as long as I did because it wasn't until I was ready to make my way back to the car that I noticed the Little Blue Dragonlet. Movement caught my eye, as is often the case with small Odonates. And my instinct to grab my camera was good because I knew that it might not linger for long. I had no idea what it was. My first thought was perhaps an Elfin Skimmer! I was super excited about what I had seen and I knew I had taken only two good shots before I lost it in the vegetation never to see it again. Hiking back to my car, I quickly hopped in and drove to the nearest town where I could get a good phone signal in order to be able to look online for some images to help with ID. I immediately recognized it as a Little Blue Dragonlet, a species that hadn't been seen in the state for a good number of years. But because I knew the site was sensitive and the owner unlikely to give permission to others, I felt it was important to keep it under my hat. Later that summer I found a similar site also by using Google Maps, where I was lucky enough to find scads of Yellow-sided Skimmers and, you guessed it, another Little Blue Dragonlet! I had the search image in my mind now, and the micro-habitat that the species preferred. As this is a more southern species and only seen in the more southern counties in Ohio, perhaps they prefer the seeps which don't freeze in the winter. This Little Blue Dragonlet also favored the very fine rushes at the edge of the marsh in this arid seep. Later in the season, this area also would yield high numbers of Great Spread-wings as well as the Seepage Dancers, Comet Darners, Spangled Skimmers, Painted Skimmers and a Golden-winged Skimmer!

It all came down to recognizing the micro-habitat which the species preferred, putting myself in the middle of it and waiting and watching for what might happen.

Nina Harfmann

Photo of the Month



Smoky Rubyspot. Photo: Jon Cefus. Killbuck Creek near Plainfield in Coshocton County, 9/17/21. Nikon D610 with a Nikon 300mm lens and a Nikon 1.4 teleconverter (420mm). ISO1000, shutter priority 1/1000, f8, +1/3 stop exposure. RAW.

As part of our 2021 birding survey in Coshocton County, Kent Miller and I spent the morning seeking migrant birds and then we pivoted into seeking Odonata in the late morning/early afternoon. We checked a small stream near Plainfield hoping to see/photograph Laura's Clubtail (no photos, but likely had one roosting that was put up by a passing Fawn Darner and we could not relocate it with no access to the stream itself beyond a bridge). Our plan was to drive north towards Holmes County to areas on Killbuck Creek that have traditionally held Smoky Rubyspots to try to see them and perhaps get better photos than we previously had. Before going

further north, Kent suggested we check a spot near Plainfield where we thought we could at least see parts of the creek and perhaps add them to our Coshocton County list of Odonata. We were successful locating a group of Smokies on the creek with what was a group of no less than 6 bugs, more likely 8-10. A few, including the one photographed below, perched on vegetation very close to us providing excellent photo opportunities.

Jon Cefus

October ID Challenge



The ID Challenge only includes species known from Ohio. A description of how you arrive at your identification is not required but appreciated. Please include your name in the email; not to worry, only correct responses will be posted in the next newsletter. Identification to: lundbergj@hotmail.com.

Bug Nets and Bicycles

Bob Glotzhofer's quixotic Clubtail quest aboard a 2-wheeler and wielding an antique net:

*Being retired but needing to stay in shape, I try to ride my bicycle as often as I can along the Columbus Metro Parks' bike paths. In late July, while pedaling along Blacklick Creek, a large clubtail dragonfly buzzed past me. I could not be certain, as we were both going at a high rate of speed in different directions, but it appeared to be a Dragonhunter (*Hagenius brevistylus*). Apart from the Darby Creeks and parts of the Olentangy, most of the streams I've worked around Columbus have been impacted by storm sewer outflows, fertilizer runoff and other pollution, and have not been very productive for dragonflies – especially not for clubtails. Therefore, I was really interested in what I was seeing. How could I get back to this area and sample it for dragons and damsels?*

On 7 August 2021 I made that foray. I rode my bicycle 6.5 miles from home along with my old tennis shoes, my collecting fanny pack, and a neat old folding net (more on that later). I crossed the creek on one of the bikeway's bridges, pulled off the path and pulled my bike down along the bridge and concealed it beneath the bridge, and entered the stream. The net I was using has a nice, sturdy bamboo handle. I always find a good net handle makes a good third leg for stability while wading in deeper portions of a stream.

The day was not the best of weather for searching for odes. It was warm enough, but clouds fought back and forth with sunshine. There was just enough sunshine to give reasonable flying time for dragonflies --but not "perfect" for them. I was disappointed on both the abundance and variety of species I saw. Most abundant were American Rubyspots, then Stream Bluets, and Blue-fronted Dancers. I saw only one each of an Ebony Jewelwing and an Eastern Pondhawk during about 1.5 hours of searching. While without a second or third visit to

confirm it, I'd say this stretch of Blacklick Creek is likely sub-optimal habitat. I found similar results a couple of years ago a few miles away on Big Walnut Creek where after three visits in excellent weather, I also saw a single Dragonhunter and low abundance of similar common species as listed above. I don't have hard statistics, but I think low levels of pollution allow pollution intolerant species like clubtails to exist, but in very low numbers. I'd be glad to hear comments from others to support or deny this concept.

Now, on to my folding net. A year or two before I retired, I was working in my one-man office in the natural history collections facility at the Ohio Historical Society (now the Ohio History Connection). I don't recall the projects at the time, but I do recall that I was somewhat "swamped." One of my many outside friends came in and offered me this folding net – explaining that he had been given it from so-and-so, who had used it for many years. Now I already had at least 2 or 3 folding nets from BioQuip, one of which I used years before on a backpacking trip to Isle Royale for collecting dragonflies. At my age I was not planning any more backpacking, but I thanked him and set it aside almost without looking at it. We talked briefly – as both of us were busy, and he went on his way. I never took any notes. I am ashamed to say that my mind was not with it. Months later when I finally picked it up to carefully examine it, I could not even recall who had dropped it off or who they said had given it to them. Now that is a major mistake for any museum curator! Oops, and double oops!

Anyway – this net is at least twice as good as any folding net from BioQuip or any place else that I have ever seen. It obviously has seen lots of use – the bamboo handle has, at some point, been reinforced with a white tape – but it is still super strong. The

metal pieces are excellently machined and fit together perfectly.



"Harrimac" (? spelling?) folding insect net. Maximum folded lengths = 25 inches
Bamboo shaft wound with tape; Aluminum joints; steel net rim.
Net when opened = 13 x 15 inches. Assembled net and handle = 64 inches long
HarrimacNet2005

The only thing I did was to replace the net bag. Folded maximum length is 25 inches. When opened, the bag is not quite round, but about 13 x 15 inches across – for me a perfect size. When the two handle pieces are assembled with the net, it reaches 64 inches long. The name stamped on the base of the net rim is "Harrimac."



Imprint on "Harrimac" folding insect net.

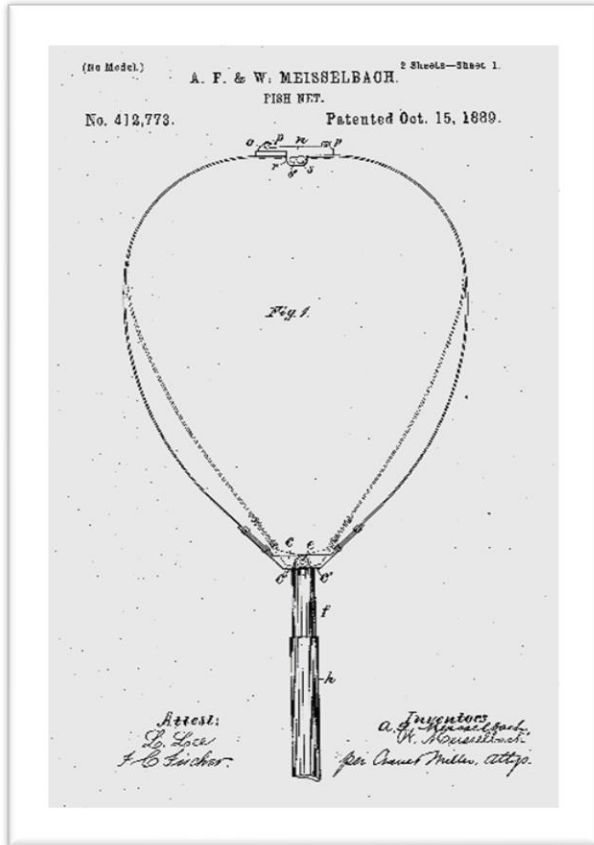
HarrimacNetLabel2012

I have tried to google that name but found nothing. If anyone out there knows anything about the history of this folding net, please let me know. And – if anyone reading this is the kind person who gave me the net – I apologize for forgetting and hope you will let me know who you got it from. Perhaps after using it a few more years, it should be deposited into the permanent collections of the Ohio History Connection complete with a series of stories about where it came from and how it was used to further our knowledge of the natural history of our state!

Bob Glotzhober rplotz@twc.com

Editor's note: Bob's net shares design features with this fish net, Patent No. 412,773, October 15, 1889.

[US412773A - Fish-net - Google Patents](#)



September Challenge Revealed



The September challenge (perhaps unfairly) didn't indicate the observation date of this early-season species. Coloration might indicate a pruinose King Skimmer species, a Whiteface species, Eastern Pondhawk or even this month's featured Little Blue Dragonlet. But this blue-grey species is duller than all those and has *consistent* coloration across the thorax and abdomen. This is a tough ID, as coloration is not always the best identifier, and the diagnostic doubled dark basal markings on all four wings are, so to speak, lost in the weeds. Bravo to all who participated in the ID Challenge. **Blue Corporal**



Virtual Dragonhunters

Dragonfly Society of the Americas Virtual Lecture Series. Lecture schedules are updated regularly at:

[Dragonfly Society of the Americas](#)

DragonflySocietyAmericas.org

New Destinations - Planning

A few free hours canvassing familiar sites offers fresh air, exercise and a renewed awareness of the nature surrounding us. Planning is not required; we head straight to the productive spots where we know we'll find the dragonflies.

New destinations do require planning. Nina's article about finding the Dragonlet hints at the planning that led to the discovery of a very productive site. A new destination doesn't have to be a quest for a lifer or a county or state record, but planning will make the most of our time when, excuse the expression, we put boots on the ground.

This is an appeal to the membership for submissions on new destination planning strategies including niche habitats worth exploring, virtual habitat research, winter habitat surveys, research resources and I-don't-know-what-else. You do!

As an example, this strategy from Jim Lemon on finding a county record: *First, find a county with a specific species unreported, surrounded by counties that have all reported that species.*

If membership participation makes this a successful OOS effort, November or December's newsletter will include an article on planning for Season 2022. Submissions ranging from single one-liner tips to lengthy research flows are all welcomed. Although, recognition is preferred, please note if desiring anonymous publication of your submission.

Submissions to: lundbergj@hotmail.com

October Overview

The most commonly observed species in recent years for October: Autumn Meadowhawk, Familiar Bluet, Shadow Darner, Eastern Forktail, Fragile Forktail, Blue-faced Meadowhawk, Eastern Pondhawk, Great Spreadwing. Once we're into November, it's mostly Autumn Meadowhawks.

We are still collecting data for the Survey; if you made photographs of Odonata this year and haven't submitted them to iNaturalist, please do. All data has value. If you collected Odonata this year and would like the data to become part of the Odonata Society database, please send me the pertinent data points: Species, Date, Location, Collector, and the collection where the specimens are located.

jlem@woh.rr.com

Ohio Dragonfly Survey Year-To-Date through September

Numbers by County

County	Observations	Species	Observers
Adams	169	35	20
Allen	56	20	5
Ashland	65	27	16
Ashtabula	1704	64	27
Athens	84	33	16
Auglaize	67	26	6
Belmont	47	15	4
Brown	76	31	6
Butler	663	43	48
Carroll	20	13	2
Champaign	929	56	43
Clark	527	53	28
Clermont	409	55	50
Clinton	87	23	12

Columbiana	54	16	9
Coshocton	1000	52	6
Crawford	75	35	9
Cuyahoga	704	53	85
Darke	283	53	6
Defiance	73	33	8
Delaware	150	35	50
Erie	214	32	16
Fairfield	56	25	19
Fayette	119	35	6
Franklin	1593	56	128
Fulton	88	29	6
Gallia	25	17	4
Geauga	946	77	48
Greene	593	57	55
Guernsey	41	19	3
Hamilton	618	54	90
Hancock	184	45	15
Hardin	49	24	2
Harrison	58	32	8
Henry	75	25	4
Highland	134	34	16
Hocking	74	30	20
Holmes	78	24	15
Huron	122	22	5
Jackson	107	22	12
Jefferson	40	16	4
Knox	53	17	12
Lake	786	71	47
Lawrence	40	17	5
Licking	274	35	25
Logan	277	47	7
Lorain	828	56	43
Lucas	1704	75	64
Madison	229	29	15
Mahoning	56	19	19
Marion	58	20	5
Medina	296	39	27
Meigs	30	15	3
Mercer	83	25	2
Miami	239	50	15

Monroe	16	11	3
Montgomery	903	72	66
Morgan	109	29	7
Morrow	45	22	9
Muskingum	82	33	11
Noble	39	18	3
Ottawa	108	26	27
Paulding	79	29	2
Perry	118	22	5
Pickaway	55	22	18
Pike	144	32	10
Portage	498	66	39
Preble	49	23	19
Putnam	87	24	4
Richland	51	20	14
Ross	105	28	12
Sandusky	216	31	15
Scioto	112	20	12
Seneca	60	21	7
Shelby	184	45	10
Stark	1392	72	31
Summit	956	64	105
Trumbull	135	33	13
Tuscarawas	72	26	6
Union	176	27	17
Van Wert	34	21	2
Vinton	54	19	4
Warren	225	50	43
Washington	60	25	3
Wayne	116	28	28
Williams	205	43	5
Wood	196	33	18
Wyandot	41	21	7

Species Count

Species	#	# Counties
Eastern Pondhawk	1662	88
Blue Dasher	1652	88
Common Whitetail	1436	84
Widow Skimmer	1343	88
Eastern Forktail	1273	87
Fragile Forktail	1268	88
Eastern Amberwing	992	83
Ebony Jewelwing	900	69
Violet Dancer	706	71
Blue-fronted Dancer	637	73
Powdered Dancer	630	50
Familiar Bluet	519	71
Slaty Skimmer	507	57
Common Green Darner	472	60
Autumn Meadowhawk	467	50
Twelve-spotted Skimmer	457	64
Blue-tipped Dancer	456	57
Double-striped Bluet	450	67
American Rubyspot	440	43
Stream Bluet	415	57
Halloween Pennant	402	69
Slender Spreadwing	336	51
Calico Pennant	327	52
Skimming Bluet	322	61
Orange Bluet	306	62
Black Saddlebags	280	59
Prince Baskettail	268	64
Blue-ringed Dancer	253	39
Westfall's Slender Bluet	239	40
Azure Bluet	212	42
Unicorn Clubtail	199	45
Carolina Saddlebags	164	38
Dot-tailed Whiteface	149	22
Lancet Clubtail	146	36
Turquoise Bluet	138	13
Eastern Red Damselfly	127	17
Dusky Dancer	121	34
Blue-faced Meadowhawk	117	19

Spangled Skimmer	117	29
Wandering Glider	115	33
Midland Clubtail	108	22
Painted Skimmer	107	24
Seepage Dancer	106	5
Citrine Forktail	98	31
Amber-winged Spreadwing	89	18
Great Spreadwing	82	13
Dragonhunter	80	21
Vesper Bluet	80	18
Lilypad Forktail	79	8
Cobra Clubtail	78	12
Ashy Clubtail	76	27
Banded Pennant	71	15
Black-shouldered Spinyleg	69	22
Flag-tailed Spinyleg	67	20
Tule Bluet	66	10
Elfin Skimmer	65	2
Spotted Spreadwing	62	16
Shadow Darner	61	24
Band-winged Meadowhawk	60	15
Swamp Spreadwing	60	20
Comet Darner	59	23
Sphagnum Sprite	58	9
Plains Clubtail	54	2
Swamp Darner	52	28
Sweetflag Spreadwing	49	12
Swift River Cruiser	48	20
Elegant Spreadwing	47	11
Gray Petaltail	46	15
Pronghorn Clubtail	46	8
Spot-winged Glider	45	16
Swift Setwing	45	4
Aurora Damselfly	44	12
Emerald Spreadwing	38	14
Paiute Dancer	37	3
Smoky Rubyspot	37	4
Arrow Clubtail	35	8
Fawn Darner	35	17
Spatterdock Darner	32	13
Blue Corporal	31	13

Brown Spiketail	31	4
Cyrano Darner	30	13
Royal River Cruiser	28	16
Common Baskettail	27	16
Great Blue Skimmer	26	10
Sedge Sprite	26	4
Eastern Least Clubtail	25	5
Belted Whiteface	24	1
Eastern Ringtail	23	4
Yellow-sided Skimmer	23	1
Rapids Clubtail	22	9
Southern Pygmy Clubtail	21	2
White-faced Meadowhawk	21	3
Ruby Meadowhawk	20	12
Arrowhead Spiketail	19	8
Delta-spotted Spiketail	19	2
Russet-tipped Clubtail	19	2
Springtime Darner	19	11
Lyre-tipped Spreadwing	18	1
Rainbow Bluet	18	7
Clamp-tipped Emerald	17	7
River Jewelwing	17	1
Lilypad Clubtail	15	3
Mocha Emerald	15	6
Dusky Clubtail	14	5
Duckweed Firetail	13	1
Golden-winged Skimmer	12	4
Harlequin Darner	12	3
Southern Spreadwing	12	6
Common Sanddragon	11	3
Double-ringed Pennant	10	2
Handsome Clubtail	9	3
Rusty Snaketail	9	2
Black-tipped Darner	8	3
Elusive Clubtail	7	3
Lance-tipped Darner	7	2
Tiger Spiketail	7	3
Jade Clubtail	6	2
Green-faced Clubtail	5	1
Twin-spotted Spiketail	5	4
Laura's Clubtail	4	2

Northern Bluet	4	1
Stream Cruiser	4	2
Beaverpond Baskettail	3	2
Gilded River Cruiser	3	1
Ocellated Darner	3	3
Slender Baskettail	3	3
Green-striped Darner	2	1
Marsh Bluet	2	1
Rambur's Forktail	2	1
Chalk-fronted Corporal	1	1
Frosted Whiteface	1	1
Macromia Hybrid	1	1
Red Saddlebags	1	1
Riffle Snaketail	1	1
Saffron-winged Meadowhawk	1	1
<i>Smoky Shadowdragon</i>	1	1
<i>Splendid Clubtail</i>	1	1
<i>Stygian Shadowdragon</i>	1	1
<i>Variiegated Meadowhawk</i>	1	1