

The Ohio Dragon-Flyer

Newsletter of the Ohio Odonata Society

April 2021, Volume 30: Number 4

Spring is sprung! As I sit here starting this month's newsletter, out my window the trees are in full bloom - white, pink, and a whole range of chartreuse across the oaks, birch, and maples. After months of admiring gray trunks and branches, this renewed multi-colored view expands my own gray matter pretty significantly. With spring, our Odonata are here or are soon to emerge.

The Common Green Darners (*Anax junius*) arrived in March, pretty much on schedule. The first iNat observation on CGD was on Mar 20 in Hamilton Co thanks to Dave Tibbetts! Others quickly followed – with reports arriving from all over Ohio. Lynda Andrews had our first non-CGD dragon with a Blue Corporal (*Ladona deplanata*) in Athens Co on Apr 8. We have also had our first Eastern Forktails (*Ischnura verticalis*) - thank you Sarah White (Montgomery Co, Apr 10) and Rajat Saksena (Delaware Co, Apr 9).

Sightings should continue to ramp up - roughly in this order: Fragile Forktail (*Ischnura posita*) anyday now; and possibly storm-blown Variegated Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum corruptum*) anytime. We had 18 VMs reported in Apr 2020, our biggest month ever for VM. This was more than any prior year total.



Current OOS Board -

President - MaLisa Spring, spring.99@osu.edu

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Past-President - Shane Myers,
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Treasurer - Bob Restifo, rarestifo@yahoo.com

CoVid - blah

While it sounds like we're making progress on CoVid vaccinations, the numbers are still mixed, and unprotected people are still at risk. The Dragonfly Society of the Americas (DSA) annual meeting has again been postponed, hoping to reconvene in Oklahoma in 2022. Ohio is next in line to host, so we're hoping to have DSA 2023 at Marietta. The OOS Board is trying to figure out possibilities for a 2021 meeting at Gorman Nature Center. Stay tuned.

Early Emergence

Swamp Darner	<i>Epiaeschna heros</i>	13-Apr
Painted Skimmer	<i>Libellula semifasciata</i>	13-Apr
Southern Spreadwing	<i>Lestes australis</i>	13-Apr
Citrine Forktail	<i>Ischnura hastata</i>	14-Apr
Carolina Saddlebags	<i>Tramea carolina</i>	14-Apr
Ebony Jewelwing	<i>Calopteryx maculata</i>	15-Apr
Springtime Darner	<i>Basiaeschna janata</i>	17-Apr
Blue Dasher	<i>Pachydiplax longipennis</i>	17-Apr
Common Whitetail	<i>Plathemis lydia</i>	19-Apr
Uhler's Sundragon	<i>Helocordulia uhleri</i>	19-Apr
Stream Cruiser	<i>Didymops transversa</i>	20-Apr
Aurora Damsel	<i>Chromagrion conditum</i>	23-Apr
Twin-spotted Spiketail	<i>Cordulegaster maculata</i>	26-Apr
Familiar Bluet	<i>Enallagma civile</i>	26-Apr
Beaverpond Baskettail	<i>Epitheca canis</i>	26-Apr
Dot-tailed Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia intacta</i>	27-Apr
Lancet Clubtail	<i>Phanogomphus exilis</i>	27-Apr
Azure Bluet	<i>Enallagma aspersum</i>	29-Apr
Skimming Bluet	<i>Enallagma geminatum</i>	29-Apr
Common Baskettail	<i>Epitheca cynosura</i>	29-Apr
Orange Bluet	<i>Enallagma signatum</i>	30-Apr
Rapids Clubtail	<i>Phanogomphus quadricolor</i>	30-Apr

Once we're into May it will be game on, especially with Clubtails. Plan ahead - don't miss Clubtail season!

Ticks - blah

Also plan for tick season - don't forget the insect-shield clothing and repellent. Black-legged Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) can give us Lyme disease. Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*) bites can trigger significant allergic reactions. If you step into the tall grass to get that lifer-photo - do the tick check! And as a general guideline - after a day in the field, check your crevices!

Tempting Cruisers and Mysterious Holes

Ed. Note - Many of us interacted with MaLisa Spring when she was the Dragonfly Survey Coordinator. While she's moved on to her next gig with Bees, here's her writeup on a day in the field from last year.

The day started like most others. I packed up my food for the day, grabbed my hat, and started my long drive to Williams County. If you are not familiar with all 88 counties in Ohio, Williams is on the most northwestern corner of the state. It is also home to Homer F. Price. He was a farmer who was really into insects and collected over 4,000 specimens of dragonflies between 1921 and 1965. He helped to make Williams county one of the better reported counties historically, with over 109 species known from the county! Many of the species he documented have not been seen in

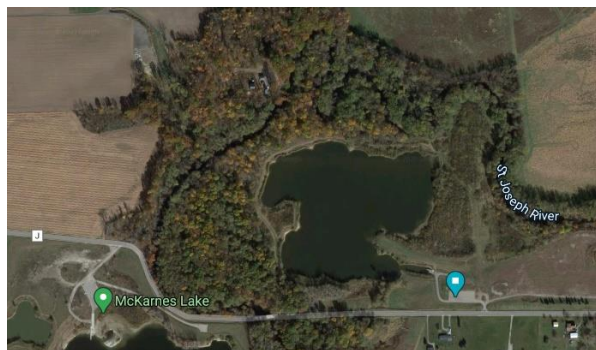
the area since. This is likely due to undersampling in the decades since he was collecting, but also major habitat changes (and changes in farming



Fig. 2.17 Homer F. Price (1895-1987) and his wife, Gladys, at home in 1963.
Source: Butterflies and Skippers of Ohio. 1992

practices).

My first site of the day was St Joseph River Wildlife Area, where I was tasked to do a timed survey for bumblebees. I chose to walk around the lake on the north side of the road, as that had the most accessible path. As part of my bee survey, I also had my permit from the Division of Wildlife that allows me to carry a net and collect select insects, including dragonflies.



So begins my 90-minute bee survey. The survey involves walking around a site, noting which plants are flowering, and identifying any

bumblebees, carpenter bees, or honeybees and which flowers they are visiting. Of course, while walking around, my eyes follow any movement in case it might be a bee, though often turns out to be other insects like cicadas and dragonflies. And despite the wingstem and ironweed blooming, there was not a lot of bee activity. There were, however, lots of river cruisers.

If you are familiar with river cruisers (genus *Macromia*), you know they rarely cooperate for a photograph as they tend to zoom on by and keep flying long lengths away. The first cruiser I saw did just that. As did the second and the third, none of which were in nets reach even if I wanted to swing. It was probably not until the 4th cruiser that one suddenly flew right by me and perched vertically in a tree.

“Ahah! Now is my chance!” I thought while moving to pause my bee timer. However, by the time I had stepped slightly around a patch of flowers and started to slip off my backpack to get out my camera, the cruiser was gone. I did see a Blue Dasher (*Pachydiplax longipennis*) perched on a nearby twig, but I did not bother to try to photograph it. Alas, back to counting bees I went.

And instead of seeing many bees, suddenly a meadowhawk appeared directly in front of me. I swung, and I caught it! I made sure to pause my bee timer again while I took a few documentary photos. I took cell phone photos of the body and subgenital plates first just in case I accidentally released her while getting out my dSLR camera from my backpack. All went as planned and I was able to get some documentary shots on my dSLR camera before releasing her and continuing my bee survey.



The 5th-7th cruisers, I only saw them briefly as they flew by. I also do not have my dSLR out while I am surveying for bees, as carrying the net, clipboard, and pen is already too much. So I was not able to sneak in some attempts at panning with the cruisers as they passed and hoping to get a photograph. I either had to hope a cruiser lands again, or I net one.

I did net a male Blue-fronted Dancer (*Argia apicalis*), which I photographed with my cell phone and then released.



Around the 8th cruiser or so, I was finally lucky to get close enough to swing. And so I swung... and missed. It then proceeded to fly up, up, up, and left the area entirely.

I swung at the 9th cruiser and missed.

The 10th cruiser I saw coming. I teed up and I hit it! Instead of going in my net, I had hit it with the

rim, knocking it into the nearby vegetation. However, there was a flash of movement and I saw my cruiser being dragged down a large hole! Something had grabbed it and was dragging it into the depths of this mysterious hole!

I yelled. I lunged for the hole. Whatever was grabbing it disappeared down into the hole at my approach, but the dragonfly was just barely still visible. I went to grab the dragonfly out of the hole, but then the dragonfly fell farther into the hole, going deeper and deeper, out of sight. Maybe whatever it was had latched on and started dragging it down again. I am not sure. I put the handle of my net down the hole to try and see if I could get it back that way, but the hole was several feet deep and much too dark to see anything else. Even my cell phone flashlight did little to illuminate its depths. I hope the resident of the hole enjoyed its free meal, though I would have appreciated at least getting a photograph first before it devoured it. Alas, it was not to be.

I continued my bee survey, still walking around the lake and watching the flowers for activity. Suddenly, a clubtail flew by and perched on the shore in front of me. So I paused my timer again and tried to approach it. I should have at least pulled out my dSLR to get some photos, but I attempted to net it instead. I crouched and crept close but missed my swing. And off it went, flying to the opposite shore of the lake.

I did luck upon a male Familiar Bluet (*Enallagma civile*), which I was also able to net and photograph with my cell phone before releasing.



The rest of the walk was uneventful. A few Black Saddlebags (*Tamea lacerata*) flew overhead, and a large darnier flew from the top of a tree. Another cruiser flew by, but not close enough to swing. And then my timer went off, my bee survey done.

I was unable to document any cruisers, despite them being the most common dragonfly at the site. If I had the time to pause and try to use my dSLR camera to photograph them, I might have been able to at least get a blurry photograph to show. But I had two more bee surveys to complete and a three-hour drive home, so I did not have the time to be distracted.

However, if you happen to visit St. Joseph Wildlife Area, hopefully you can successfully photo document a cruiser. Or you can apply for a permit to carry a net as well and perhaps repeat my endeavor, though hopefully the mystery hole creature does not take your capture as well.

Good luck! MaLisa

Ed. Note - As it happens, I had just been this same area the week before MaLisa's trip and had multiple observations of Royal River Cruiser (*Macromia taeniolata*) and Swift River (*Macromia illinoensis*).

Take it easy – Stay Safe!

The recently arrived issue of Argia (news journal for DSA) relays the passing of Greg Lasley, prominent naturalist and photographer. Early on, Greg had his dragonfly photo collections online, this was one of the first that I used, and still very good. He travelled widely and documented many Dragons and Damsels. Greg was a frequent Odonata ID contributor on iNaturalist. He helped many of us - including my initial observations of Jade Clubtail (*Arigomphus submedianus*), for which I am thankful. Greg lived in Texas, but made several trips to Ohio (2003, 2005, 2009) from which he contributed 12 records to our data for Tuscarawas Co. He leaves an impressive legacy and a vacancy in our North America Odonata expertise. If you are a DSA, take a look at the many tributes to Greg, very humbling.

OK, after starting the newsletter yesterday in sunshine, I just had my morning walk in the drizzle. Things change. Good to keep in mind. I also see this morning that Jon Cefus came across a Carolina Saddlebags (*Tamea carolina*) yesterday in Stark Co. Nicely done Jon. This – and the other new reports - provide incentive for me to get back out to some wetlands this week - and away from my glowing rectangle of doom.

Enjoy the day.

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