

The Ohio Dragon-Flyer

Newsletter of the Ohio Odonata Society

May 2021, Volume 30: Number 5

Clubtail Season! Everybody has favorite times of the year, and their own reasons. Mid-May to mid-June marks the emergence of most Ohio Clubtails. 2020 was our best year ever for Clubtails - both species and overall numbers. Only two species, Spine-crowned and Northern Pygmy, do not have recent records. Many Clubtails are river species, but some are also found at still waters. Get Ready!

Name	Early Date	# Records
Common Sanddragon	27-May	112
Dragonhunter	6-Jun	221
Rusty Snaketail	17-May	89
Riffle Snaketail	26-May	31
Eastern Ringtail	24-Jun	59
Spine-crowned Clubtail	8-Jun	3
Green-faced Clubtail	18-May	35
Midland Clubtail	26-Apr	459
Plains Clubtail	27-May	84
Handsome Clubtail	15-May	77
Riverine Clubtail	18-Jun	15
Cobra Clubtail	18-May	186
Skillet Clubtail	23-May	26
Splendid Clubtail	24-May	71
Elusive Clubtail	30-May	20
Russet-tipped Clubtail	25-May	135
Arrow Clubtail	1-Jul	227
Ashy Clubtail	20-Apr	470
Pronghorn Clubtail	4-May	304
Lancet Clubtail	27-Apr	747
Dusky Clubtail	3-May	117



Current OOS Board -

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

Vice-President - Kyle Bailey,
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Past-President - Shane Myers,
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Member-at-Large – Dave McShaffrey,
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Treasurer - Bob Restifo, rarestifo@yahoo.com

Name	Early Date	# Records
Rapids Clubtail	30-Apr	130
Lilypad Clubtail	13-May	63
Unicorn Clubtail	25-Apr	799
Jade Clubtail	14-Jun	54
Laura's Clubtail	17-Jun	43
Flag-tailed Spinyleg	14-Jun	438
Black-shouldered Spinyleg	13-May	350
Eastern Least Clubtail	25-May	134
Northern Pygmy Clubtail	3-Jun	6
Southern Pygmy Clubtail	19-May	43

CoVid – blah

The Ohio Odonata Society (OOS) Board is still trying to figure out possibilities for a summer meeting, or perhaps several get-togethers. Stay tuned.

MayDay! MayDay!

Volunteers Needed!

We have a couple opportunities for anyone interested.

Bob Restifo, long-time Secretary/Treasurer is ready to pass along this role in the OOS. Bob's served long (like 25 years) and served well. This is kind-of-a big deal, requiring attendance at meetings and banking responsibilities. If you have questions or want to take command of the vast OOS financial resources, please get in touch.

Kim Smith would like to let go of being the Ohio Odonata FaceBook Admin. This is an important role in monitoring the Ohio Odonata page and helping people with the group. Again, get in touch if you have questions.

Since we're on the subject, if anyone is interested in editing the OOS Newsletter (which you're now reading), I will hand it on and get out of the way.

A new feature – *Ode Oldies*

We love good stories. You probably noticed that The OOS Newsletter is now in volume 30. That means there's a fair amount of history - and good stories from the past. We have many new readers that weren't around for the history, and those of us that were may not remember. So, my plan is to

republish bits. In addition to the OOS Newsletter (Steve Chordas ed.), Larry Rosche also had NE Ohio Dragonviews for years.

One of my 2020 highlights was finding an Eastern Ringtail on the Great Miami River just north of Piqua, so I was happy to have the following story.

The Search for the Eastern Ringtail

Bill Hull (From NE Ohio Dragonviews 2009, Larry Rosche Ed.)

As some of you know one of my goals for this summer was to search for the Eastern Ringtail, a dragonfly for which there are only two published occurrences in Ohio.

According to *The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Ohio* (edited by Glotzhober and McShaffrey, 2002) there are two records for Ohio as follows.

- "Homer Price collected a single male along the Maumee River in Crane Township, Paulding County on 29 July 1954 (specimen in OSU collection)." The only other report is a published record with a supporting specimen, published by Hine and reported as taken by Williamson near Harrison (Hamilton County) on July 26, 1903. Hine also said that Williamson mentioned having seen specimens in Drury's collection taken in Cincinnati."

Of the 160+ dragonflies and damselflies reported from Ohio approximately 10 have not been seen since 1960 or earlier. Of these, the Eastern Ringtail seemed to be a good candidate for "rediscovery" since one of the old records was from my county with a general location noted. Since the location was listed as "near Harrison" I

assumed that the Whitewater River or one of its tributaries was the most likely source. The Whitewater flows along the south side of Harrison.



Eastern Ringtail
Bill Hull©

In *Dragonflies of Indiana* (Curry, 2001) two counties adjacent to Ohio, Dearborn and Franklin, through which the Whitewater River flows are shown as having reports for this species. However, no date data is given for the records.

With the above as background information I decided to try and search for the ringtail along the Whitewater River in Hamilton County. The first problem was finding appropriate locations with public access. When looking for clubtails I like to search locations where there are open banks and field type habitat adjacent to the river. I was not aware of many locations with public access along this river but had heard that the Hamilton County Parks District had numerous holdings along the river. Using the Hamilton County Auditor's web site I looked at property records to determine if any of these were adjacent to roads with locations appropriate for parking. It turned out there was a large property that was part of the old Kilby Roads gravel pit complex that met my criteria. There are extensive open fields and a few locations where

one can access walkable river banks and gravel bars.

I had previously visited this property alone on June 29th and with Bob Foppe on July 2nd. The June visit was unseasonably cool and at times cloudy and windy. Although no clubtails were found, I did see a total of 19 other dragon/damselfly species. The July visit was hot and sunny but the confirmed observed species count was much lower at only 4, partly as a result of focusing on the river at the expense of the gravel pit ponds. Beyond the 4 species that were identified, 2 clubtails were seen in flight but not identified. Both had flushed off areas of exposed dirt along the river.

On August 23, I made a return visit hoping to find some of the hanging (*Stylurus* species) clubtails. After arriving at 11:15 I started to walk back to the river. The walk to the river is approximately a mile along a gravel road through fields surrounding the old gravel pit ponds. At a little over the half way point a clubtail flushed from the side of the road but I lost sight of it as it flew high in the direction of the sun. After about 20 feet I flushed a second clubtail which flew out over the fields but returned to the roadside about 30 feet away from me. Through binoculars I noted a lightly colored clubtail which I assumed was going to be a Flag-tailed Spinyleg. After snapping a few distant photos I worked on getting closer for a better look. After working to within about 15 feet of it I realized that it was not a spinyleg based upon structure and worked to get more photos. At this point I realized that it was probably an Eastern Ringtail and continued to work closer in order to get better photos. Unfortunately the sun was not in a good position and when I finally tried to

position myself for better light it flushed and flew back into the field where I lost track of it.

At this point I only had about 1 hour before I needed to return home so I continued to walk towards the river. I saw two unidentified clubtails flying over a small pond very close to the river and a female Flag-tailed Spinyleg. On the return walk to my car I flushed one clubtail close to where I had seen the ringtail but lost sight of it as it flew back into the field.

During the visit I saw a total of 18 confirmed species, one unidentified river cruiser and the previously mentioned clubtails that escaped identification. There were quite a few good butterflies at the site with Little Yellow, Sleepy Orange, American Snout and Variegated Fritillary all present.

--- thanks to Bill for this great story and to Larry for getting it down.

My own Ringtail story is from Aug 25, 2020. There had been 29 observations of Eastern Ringtail so far in the 2020 season from Hamilton, Butler and Montgomery Counties. On the Little Miami at Armlerder Park, the Whitewater River, and along the Great Miami River as far north as Miamisburg, and by 8 different observers. So they are around in SW Ohio.

I was hopeful of finding a new location further upstream on the GMR and had planned stops starting at Troy and going north. It was a warm sunny day with many odes in flight. My first 7 stops were good, the river was low enough to walk to most places, but no Ringtail. Stop 8 was a new location just north of Piqua that I had picked out on Google Earth – it looked to be a great location with exposed rocks and riffles. And it was.

Buzzing with odes – the usual river suspects. I waited a bit, thinking this is where I'd be if I was a dragonfly, but was ready to move on as the sun was getting lower in the sky. I turned to walk out when I caught a glimmer to my left. I turned carefully and there was the Ringtail, a mature male on a rock, in the river, with the sun at my back. Pretty cool. I got my shot. Nice to have a plan work out every now and then.

I went further up river with several other stops, and while no other Ringtails, I had 26 species on the day.



Eastern Ringtail, Great Miami River, Aug 25, 2020, Jim Lemon. What a beauty.

We had 4 additional Ringtail observations in 2020, for 34 on the year, the most ever. With an observation in northern Miami County, it shouldn't be a surprise to find them on the Mad or Stillwater Rivers – now a 2021 goal!

Take it easy – Stay Safe!

Suggestions for the Dragon-Flyer are welcome – please send ideas, questions, comments, or submissions to jlem@woh.rr.com

At an end point for this issue – Enjoy the day – JL.