
NOTES and LETTERS

DRAGONFLY SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS CONVERGES ON NORTH CENTRAL SASKATCHEWAN

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The 2013 Annual Meeting of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas (DSA) was hosted this past summer in Prince Albert and Missinipe Saskatchewan (10 – 18 July). This is the first time an event such as this has ever taken place in our province. The boreal forest of northern Saskatchewan proved to be an attractive destination with approximately 50 dragonfly experts and enthusiasts making the trip to one of the least explored regions of North America. Even the NWT has received more dragonfly survey interest than northern Saskatchewan! Most of the participants were from the southern U.S. with representation from as far away as Denmark (Fig 1).

The DSA Annual Meeting is rather unique since it involves more survey days than meeting days. Two survey days were scheduled in advance of the Annual Meeting to whet the appetites of participants for some of the rarer, more elusive types, of dragonflies. The first day involved a trip to Narrow Hills Provincial Park

where no less than eight species of Emerald (Family Corduliidae; Fig 2) were captured. Clubtail (Family Gomphidae) enthusiasts were not to be disappointed either (Fig 3). The North Saskatchewan River had long been suspected as habitat for two species of Stylurids. Adults of the brimstone and elusive clubtail (*Styluris intricatus* and *Styluris notatus*) were both captured inside Prince Albert city limits. As well, the more common boreal snaketail (*Ophiogomphus colubrinus*) and pale snaketail (*Ophiogomphus severus*) generated tremendous excitement among attendees from southern U.S. states who gleefully added them to their life lists.

Day two saw the variety of interests expanded to include orchids and owls. Keith and Carman Dodge of Nature Prince Albert introduced the group to the rare plants and orchids of MacDowall Bog. At the same time, Harold Fisher took a group of odonatologists/ornithologists north to seek out northern hawk owls and barred owls.



Figure 1 - Map showing of participant home locations



Figure 2 - Emerald dragonfly (colour image outside back cover)

Unfortunately the bird survey ended in disappointment, but long faces were quickly transformed into smiles when participants were given the opportunity to handle and tag northern saw whet owls at a number of nest boxes Harold maintains for that purpose.

The Annual Meeting (Fig 4) consisted of one day of meetings and presentations hosted by SIAST Technology Division, bookended by two days of survey activities in Prince Albert National Park. I kicked off the formal proceedings with a welcome and brief overview of reported dragonfly distributions in the region. This

was followed by a presentation from Celeste Mazzacano of the Xerces Society on the Dragonfly Migration Partnership and its role in deciphering the mysteries of dragonfly migration. Scott King gave a very informative presentation aimed at untangling phylogenetic confusion around various species of Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum* spp.). Nick Donnelly provided an equally informative discussion on the morphometry and phylogenetic relationships of *Erythemis collocata* and *simplicicollis*. Erland Nielsen then dazzled us with a visual display of dragonfly photos from around the world. Ken Tennesen concluded



Figure 3 - Clubtail dragonfly

the formal presentations with a discussion on the coincident distributions of white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and zebra clubtails (*Stylurus scudderi*). Ken was also awarded a much deserved plaque for his many years of service to the society and for his impressive contributions to the study of Odonata. A business meeting followed the proceedings. Guests were then treated to a full-on steak and pickerel supper at Cooke Municipal golf course.

Survey activities in P.A. National Park yielded many rare species of dragonfly and damselfly. A black-tipped darner (*Aeshna tuberculifera*) was captured by

Jim Johnson in a parking lot along Highway 263. Boundary bog also yielded some interesting specimens including sweetflag spreadwing (*Lestes forcipatus*) and a low latitude occurrence of Canada whiteface (*Leucorrhinia patricia*). These two rarities were captured by Nick Donnelly and Chris Hill respectively. One of the favourite locations was along the Waskesiu River trail where Ken Tennesen sampled a Hudsonian Emerald larva (*Somatochlora hudsonica*).

While the pre-meeting and Annual Meeting more than satisfied the requirements of this event, it was the unspoiled

wetlands of our Canadian shield that really captivated the interest of attendees. The post-meeting survey was held in Missinipe, SK, approximately 80 kilometres north of Lac LaRonge, from 15 – 18 July 2013. Everything exceeded expectations from the luxurious lakefront accommodations provided by Thompson Cabins to the endless succession of roadside bogs, fens, lakes, and northern streams. Survey results were also surprising with numerous range extensions and a couple of new provincial records. The plains forktail (*Ischnura damula*) had already been considered an unusual find in the region but the discovery of the eastern forktail (*Ischnura verticalis*) further north had many of us scratching our heads. Perhaps even more surprising was Cary Kearst's discovery of a racket-tailed emerald (*Dorocordulia libera*). Racket-tailed emeralds are normally restricted to the north-eastern United States with minor incursions into south-eastern Manitoba.

Taxon-specific events such as this offer a great opportunity to expand our knowledge regarding the conservation status of poorly studied groups of organisms. Be it bats, birds, or dragonflies, the ability to attract leading world authorities

more than makes up for the cost of planning and organization. In addition to the species list presented below, additional data concerning species richness and community types were also gathered. As well, a number of specimens will be donated to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. We still have a lot to learn in Saskatchewan, why not invite the world to share in our discovery?

Note: if you want to experience the meeting through the eyes of one of the attendees you are encouraged to check out DSA Annual Meeting posts 1 to 6 on Bryan Pfeiffer's blog: <http://bryanpfeiffer.com/2013/07/10/dsa-update-no-1-elusive-exclusive/>

DSA Annual Meeting 2013 Species List

Calopterygidae – Broad winged Damselflies

Calopteryx aequabilis – River Jewelwing

Lestidae – Spreadwings

Lestes disjunctus – Common Spreadwing

Lestes dryas – Emerald Spreadwing

Lestes forcipatus – Sweetflag Spreadwing

Lestes unguiculatus – Lyre-tipped Spreadwing

Coenagrionidae – Bluets

Coenagrion angulatum – Prairie Bluet

Coenagrion interrogatum - Subarctic Bluet

Coenagrion resolutum – Taiga Bluet

Enallagma boreale – Boreal Bluet

Enallagma annexum – Northern Bluet

Enallagma ebrium – Marsh Bluet

Enallagma hageni – Hagen's Bluet

Ischnura damula – Plain's Forktail

Ischnura verticalis – Eastern Forktail

Nehalennia irene – Sedge Sprite

Aeshnidae – Damselflies

Aeshna canadensis – Canada Darner

Aeshna eremita – Lake Darner

Aeshna interrupta – Variable Darner

Aeshna juncea – Sedge Darner

Aeshna sitchensis – Zig-zag Darner

Aeshna subarctica – Subarctic Darner

Aeshna tuberculifera – Black-tipped Darner

Aeshna umbrosa - Shadow Darner

Basiaeschna janata – Springtime Darner

Gomphidae – Clubtails

Ophiogomphus colubrinus – Boreal Snaketail

Ophiogomphus severus – Pale Snaketail

Stylurus intricatus – Brimstone Clubtail

Stylurus notatus – Elusive Clubtail

Corduliidae – Emeralds

Cordulia shurtleffi – American Emerald

Dorocordulia libera – Racket-tailed Emerald

Epitheca canis – Beaverpond Baskettail
Epitheca spinigera – Spiny Baskettail
Somatochlora albicincta – Ringed Emerald
Somatochlora cingulata – Lake Emerald
Somatochlora forcipata – Forcinate Emerald
Somatochlora franklini – Delicate Emerald
Somatochlora hudsonica – Hudsonian Emerald (larvae only)
Somatochlora kennedyi – Kennedy's Emerald
Somatochlora minor – Ocellated Emerald
Somatochlora walshii – Brush-tipped Emerald
Somatochlora williamsoni – Williamson's Emerald

Libellulidae – Skimmers

Leucorrhinia borealis – Boreal Whiteface
Leucorrhinia glacialis – Crimson-ringed Whiteface
Leucorrhinia hudsonica – Hudsonian Whiteface
Leucorrhinia intacta – Dot-tailed Whiteface
Leucorrhinia patricia – Canada Whiteface
Leucorrhinia proxima – Red-waisted Whiteface
Ladona julia – Chalk-fronted Corporal
Libellula quadrimaculata – Four-spotted Skimmer
Sympetrum danae – Black Meadowhawk
Sympetrum internum – Cherry-faced Meadowhawk
Sympetrum madidum – Red-veined Meadowhawk
Sympetrum obtrusum – White-faced Meadowhawk

Acknowledgements

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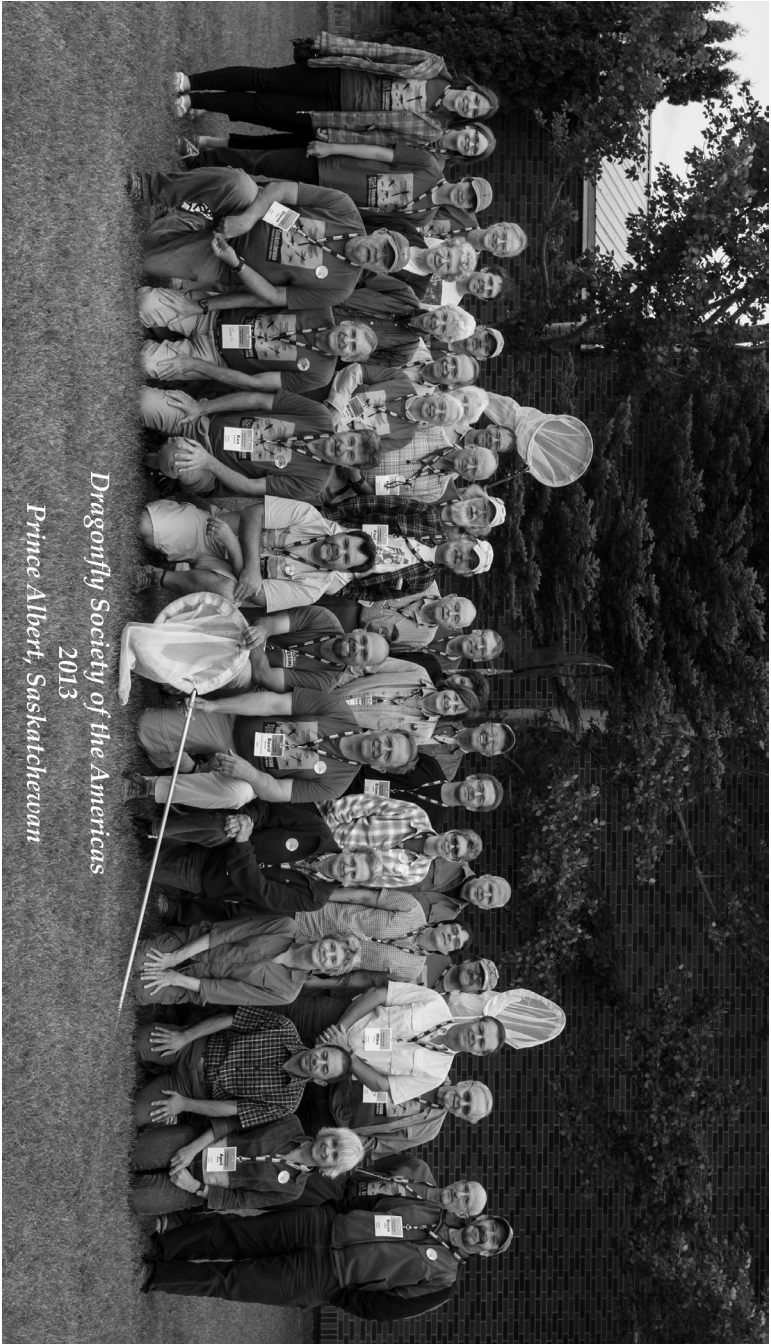


Figure 4 - Attendees of the annual meeting

