

2013 VLAWMO Summer Dragonfly Report

Written by Ami Thompson

Photography by Jacob Thompson



Dragonfly Workshop

Tamarack Nature Center 6/19/13

The four-hour dragonfly workshop was scheduled for the morning after the big Friday afternoon storms on 6/18 that left a good portion of the metro area without power. Fortunately, Tamarack Nature Center still had power so the workshop went on! However attendance was lower as many people needed to stay home to deal with home damage/flooding/power issues. However, we still had a solid turnout with 8 people.

The weather on Saturday was overcast and not ideal for dragonflies but we had a great time none-the-less. Damselflies were readily available in the wetland grasses and dragonflies in the adjacent prairies.

Jacob Thompson expertly handled all the details and organization for the workshop. Ami Thompson developed the content and facilitated the workshop.

Species Found:

Anax junius (Common Green Darner)

Dorocordulia libera (Racket-tailed Emerald)

Libellula pulchella (Twelve-Spotted Skimmer)

Libellula luctuosa (Widow Skimmer)

Leucorrhinia intacta (Dot-tailed Whiteface)

Lestes unguiculatus (Lyre-tipped Spreadwing)

Enallagma hageni (Hagen's Bluet)

Enallagma ebrium (Marsh Bluet)

Ishnura verticalis (Eastern Forktail)

Nehalennia irene (Sedge Sprite)



Bioblitz #1

Sucker Lake 7/13/13

Facilitated by Ami Thompson & Jacob Thompson

Our event was again scheduled in the morning after a stormy night leaving post-storm overcast electricity in the air. However, just after 10:00 am when our two participants showed up the sky cleared for a few hours of sun. We caught a great variety of species, including a county record. Of note were large numbers of female Common Pondhawks along the creek hunting bluets. Our participants, Megan and her husband Phil (from Ami's UMN Citizen Science Course earlier this summer), left at about noon and then the clouds returned for the rest of the hot and humid afternoon.

Species Found:

Anax junius (Common Green Darner) (M*)

Plathemis (Libellula) lydia
(Common Whitetail) (F*)

Celithemis eponina
(Halloween Pennant) (F)

Erythemis simplicicollis
(Common Pondhawk) (F, M*)

Libellula luctuosa (Widow Skimmer) (M)

Libellula pulchella
(Twelve-Spotted Skimmer)(M*)

Libellula quadrimaculata
(Four Spotted Skimmer)*

Sympetrum obstrusum
(White-faced Meadowhawk) (M*)

Argia apicalis
(Blue Fronted Dancer) (F, M)**

Enallagma exulans
(Stream Bluet) (F, M)***

Ishnura verticalis (Eastern Forktail)(F, M)

Nehalennia irene (Sedge Sprite) (F)***



* Odes spotted but not netted

** The county record species, submitted and accepted to Odonata Central (OC# 401758). Kurt Mead said that that MDS has enough samples of this species and to keep these specimens in the VLAWMO collection.

*** Non-county record specimens added to VLAWMO's collection

Bioblitz #2

Rotary Park 7/27/13

Facilitated by Ami Thompson & Jacob Thompson

The summer's theme of rain continued again at this second bioblitz. The morning started out cool and sunny but dark clouds loomed to the north. Two local naturalists, Brenda and Liz, were willing to brave the impending rain so we headed out into the park a little after 10:00 am. Meadowhawks, likely whitefaces, were extremely abundant hiding in the grasses and trees among a variety of other skimmers and some spreadwings. A fair number of bluets and sprites were taking refuge in the cattails. Not too long after we got to the prairie the rain began, starting light then turning steady. We walked back to the parking lot with our specimens and practiced ID skills while warming up and drying off in Liz's car. Due to the wet weather we didn't take any photographs.

Species Found:

Celithemis eponina (Halloween Pennant) (M&F)

Pachydiplax longipennis (Blue Dasher) (F, laying eggs in hand)

Sympetrum costiferum (Saffron-winged Meadowhawk) (F)

Sympetrum obstrusum (White-faced Meadowhawk) (F)

Lestes unguiculatus (Lyre-tipped Spreadwing)(M&F)

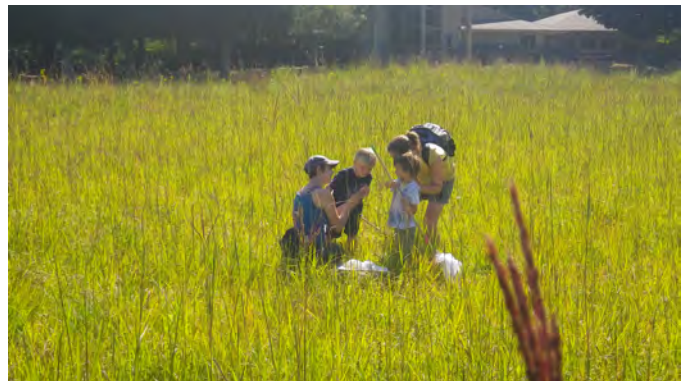
Nehalennia irene (Sedge Sprite) (M)

Bioblitz #3

Tamarack Nature Center 8/17/13

Facilitated by Ami Thompson & Jacob Thompson

Finally, a bioblitz with warmth and sun! At 10:00 am, we gave a brief how-to to our five participants (three adults and two children) and then headed out into the prairie behind the visitor center. Meadowhawks and skimmers were abundant in the grasses and soon our participants were eager to find new species. We then headed northwest to the wetland, worked our way through the woods toward the lake, continued on the path through the south prairie, and then back to the parking lot. As the day went on, the winds picked up and we saw fewer Odes.



Species Found:

Anax junius (Common Green Darner) (F)
Celithemis eponina (Halloween Pennant) (M)
Libellula luctuosa (Widow Skimmer) (F&M*)
Libellula pulchella (Twelve-Spotted Skimmer)(M*)
Sympetrum vicinum (Autumn Meadowhawk) (F)
Sympetrum obstrusum (White-faced Meadowhawk) (M)
Lestes unguiculatus (Lyre-tipped Spreadwing)(M)
Ishnura verticalis (Eastern Forktail)(F, M)
Enallagma civile (Familiar Bluet) (M, teneral)

Suspected or unknown species:

One striped-thorax darner* (not a Common Green Darner, species unknown)
Mystery female meadowhawk (*Sympetrum*)
Lestes Disjunctus (Northern Spreadwing) (F - caught but uncertain about ID)

*seen but not caught

The Familiar Bluet and Spotted Spreadwing would be new additions to the VLAWMO collection but not county records. The refrigerated specimens of those species were passed on to Vanessa on 9/13/13 and may or may not be suitable for preservation in acetone.

Graphs:

The following graphs depict the times of year each species of Odonate is expected to be present with X's indicating when we caught certain species this summer. Additional sampling during future years could fill out the graph and perhaps highlight gaps or new unexpected flight times. These charts also allow us to see how flight times may change from year to year.

The first graph was scanned from the book *Dragonflies of the Northwoods*, by Kurt Mead. The X marks were placed on top of the scan. The second graph was made in Excel to match the scanned graph's format and includes species not listed in the first.



Appendix C Phenology Flight Chart

Pg.	Species	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
48	Common Green Darner			X	X	X			
108	Beaverpond Baskettail								
164	Dot-tailed Whiteface			X					
107	Spiny Baskettail								
54	Springtime Darner								
91	Twin-spotted Spiketail								
87	Rusty Snaketail								
130	Four-spotted Skimmer								
106	Common Baskettail								
62	Dusky Clubtail								
98	Stream Cruiser								
102	American Emerald								
140	Chalk-fronted Corporal								
160	Common Pondhawk				X				
136	Common Whitetail				X				
134	Twelve-spotted Skimmer			X	X	X			
78	Horned Clubtail								
69	Skilllet Clubtail								
82	Boreal Snaketail								
76	Black-shouldered Spinyleg								
175	Halloween Pennant				X	X	X		
109	Prince Baskettail								
112	Brush-tipped Emerald								
156	Elfin Skimmer								
58	Dragonhunter								
44	Variable Darner								
150	White-faced Meadowhawk				X	X	X		
30	Canada Darner								
51	Fawn Darner								
142	Black Meadowhawk								
152	Autumn Meadowhawk								

Species	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Racket-tailed Emerald			X				
Four Spotted Skimmer				X			
Widow Skimmer			X	X	X		
Saffron-winged Meadowhawk				X			
Blue Dasher							
Lyre-tipped Spreadwing			X	X	X		
Spotted Spreadwing					X		
Blue Fronted Dancer				X X			
Stream Bluet				X			
Familiar Bluet					X		
Marsh Bluet							
Hagen's Bluet			X				
Eastern Forktail			X	X	X		
Sedge Sprite			X	X X			

Summary Notes:

All the workshop and bioblitzs were very successful and a valuable use of time. Some unfortunate weather events affected our attendance and surveys but everyone who attended was highly engaged and the diversity and quantity of Odonata found at each site was significant. Jacob took all the excellent photos included in this report and more are saved on the VLAWMO server. Jacob promoted the events by sending out notices to the VLAWMO email list and Ami posted them on her Facebook page and featured them in email newsletters.

Each bioblitz lasted for two or three hours. After the first two blitzs, Ami and Jacob met for an additional hour or two of specimen observation and identification. Ami brought the specimens from the last bioblitz home for identification and refrigerated them until passing them on to Vanessa in September.

Jacob preserved the noted specimens with acetone and added them to VLAWMO's collection.

This summer survey work successfully engaged new volunteers and added to our knowledge of which dragonflies live where in the watershed.