



The Dragonhunter

#9: Winter 2010

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Dragonfly Survey

(The NHDS is a partnership of N.H. Audubon, N.H. Fish and Game, and UNH Cooperative Extension)

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www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/dragonflies.html

Coordinator's Greeting,

With signs of spring in the air, I'm happy to finally provide all of you with a summary of the 2009 data collected by the N.H. Dragonfly Survey. It was a record year on almost all counts, as shown in the table and maps on the second page of this newsletter. This couldn't have happened without the efforts of many of you, who continue to explore new places, find new bugs, and—most importantly—send these data to me here at Audubon. In the 2009 summary I've acknowledged several volunteers by name, but this is not meant to imply that others' data are less important. Sometimes a single record of a poorly-known species (e.g., a Lake Darner in Wilmot) is just as noteworthy as finding 25 common species somewhere else. All these records add up, and when the survey is complete after 2011, I can honestly say that we'll have the best picture ever of dragonfly distributions in the Granite State! So here's looking forward to the lengthening days and the realization that—depending on the weather—the first dragons may well be emerging in only two months. And then the craziness begins anew...

Pam

Special Thanks to:

Ever wonder what eventually happens to all the data you collect? I've already acknowledged Christina Emery, who created a database for us about a year ago, but the task of actually *entering* all the data has fallen on volunteer Betsy Hamlin-Morin. She recently finished entering the nearly 2000 records for 2008, and is well on her way through 2009. So think of Betsy this summer as you fill out your forms! Not only is good penmanship appreciated, but it's a real help when you fill out the form correctly and give reasonable names to your photos. There'll be more on this issue in an upcoming newsletter, so for now, Thanks Betsy!

Heads up for 2010

This is just a reminder that in 2010 I want to focus on three new regions of the state: Grafton County, Coos County, and the White Mountains. Existing volunteers will be encouraged to pick a site or two in northern N.H. and help us fill holes in that part of the state. You can get ideas from the maps on page 2.

2009 Highlights

A broad overview of the 2009 season is on the next page, so here I'll focus on some more specific findings. Usually this highlights section focuses on the rarer species, but this time I thought it'd be fair to shine a light on dragons and damselfly are more widespread. Besides, you're probably sick and tired of me going on about Scarlet Bluets all the time...

If you've been to one of the training workshops, you should know the answer to this next question: what is the most widespread species of odonate in New Hampshire? The answer of course is Eastern Forktail, and this honor is borne out by the 2009 data. Of the 118 towns with submissions, this little green damselfly was found in 70. Rounding out the top five were Ebony Jewelwing, Variable Dancer (both from 47 towns), Common Green Darner (44), and Chalk-fronted Corporal (41). It's probably reasonable to assume that these species probably occur in *every* town in the state, with the possible exception of the unincorporated "towns" in the White Mountains where there might not be the right habitats. Have you found all five in YOUR town? If not, there's a challenge for you in the coming season.

And speaking of new town records, another way to look at the distribution question is: "Which species were found in the most NEW towns in 2009?" Some of the same players top the list this time as well: Ebony Jewelwing, Variable Dancer, and Eastern Forktail. Also in the top tier were Slender and Swamp Spreadwings, Canada and Black-tipped Darners, Twelve-spotted Skimmer, Eastern Amberwing, and Cherry-faced and Autumn Meadowhawks. All these species were recorded for the first time in 15-18 towns last year.



Female Eastern Forktail eating a damselfly: remember this bug!

2009 Season Summary

The table below compares the first three years of the NHDS. It is exciting to see that the number of hours, towns, and new records continue to increase. The bar has thus been raised (or lowered if you're doing the limbo), and I expect all sorts of great things in 2010! Of course, a significant chunk of the 2009 data were from the Dragonfly Society of the Americas meeting we held here in early August, but a perusal of the map to the right clearly indicates that good things were happening outside of Rockingham County as well.

	2009	2008	2007
Number of volunteers	47	23	35
Number of volunteer hours	700+	500+	350
Number of towns with data	118	97	74
Towns with regularly surveyed sites	37	27	28
Sites with regular data	63	49	90
Total records	3000+	1200+	1800
Number of species detected (of 162)	137	135	127
Number of priority species (of 56)	34	33	31
Records of priority species	139	162	224
New town records	850+	650+	500+
New county records	22	30	13

What the map to the right *doesn't* show is progress toward some of the regional goals I set for the survey at the beginning of 2009. Some of you may recall a document I sent out at the start of the season. This comparison is illustrated by the pair of maps in the lower right, which show the number of species known from each town at the end of 2008 and 2009. The red boxes were the target areas prioritized for 2009 field work, and with the exception of the one in the western Lakes Region, all of them were covered quite well (note the number of blue towns in each box).

At this point, a few kudos are in order. In the southwest, Stan and Willis McCumber have singlehandedly put the town of Unity on the map, and in close contention with Sunapee for having the most species in Sullivan County. Just to the south, I'll take some credit for shifting Washington from pale to dark blue, a result of a couple of visits to Pillsbury State Park.

At the other side of the state, Holly Grant surveyed Middleton with a vengeance, finding a remarkable 66 species to bring this tiny town's total up to an even 70. Also in Strafford County, Scott Young "turned Strafford Purple" (\geq species) and Martha Reinhardt found 50 species in never-before-surveyed Milton.

And then there was Rockingham County. It's particularly nice to see that only ONE of the white towns on the 2008 map remains white, indicating a complete lack of data. Granted, several have only

shifted to gray (less than 10 species), but several have also shifted into dark blue or purple. While many of these gains stem from the DSA meeting, thanks also go out to Dennis Skillman, Warren Trested, and Bob Shea for their efforts in Hampstead and Brentwood in particular. It's also worth noting that Kingston became the first town in the county to reach the 75 species mark.

Thanks to all for a great 2009!

