



27 May 2014

Dear Oklahoma Odors,

We hope you have been enjoying the season as much as we have. This spring has been much better than last (no forecasts for snow in May this year. Yippie!). So far this season we have had a slew of new county records and one new state record (Black Setwing, *Dythemis nigrescens*; reported in my mini-update of 15 May).

Jim Arterburn has posted the most county records so far, including the unexpected Double-ringed Pennant (*Celthemis verna*) he found in Wagoner County that I mentioned last time. He also reported a Slender Spreadwing (*Lestes rectangularis*) and a Vesper Bluet (*Enallagma vespersum*) for Wagoner County. He had another Vesper in Muskogee County as well as an Azure Bluet (*Enallagma aspersum*) and a Lilypad Forktail (*Ischnura kellicotti*), and he reported Oklahoma Clubtail (*Gomphus oklahomensis*) in two counties (Muskogee and Tulsa). Jim, along with Ken Williams, also got new records of Plateau Spreadwing (*Lestes alacer*) and a Band-winged Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax umbrata*) for Muskogee County. Bill Carrell racked up some additional county records including Azure Bluet and Turquoise Bluet (*Enallagma divagans*) in Wagoner County. Now if we could just get these guys covering other northeastern counties. ☺ Actually that is one of the reasons I am so excited to have new members to our ode group, as they are all from the northeast where, as you can see from the attached map, that part of the state still needs a lot of work, especially that pesky Craig County.

Other news includes David Arbour adding a new species to Red Slough WMA, which is no small feat to a wildlife refuge that has 84 species known to occur within its boundaries, including a few species that are only known in the state to occur at RS. David was leading a tour for the Red Slough Birding Convention on 6 May when he found a Turquoise Bluet. David has also spotted a few Great Pondhawks (*Erythemis vesiculosa*) this year. It appears that there is an incursion of the species in the state again, along with the Band-winged Dragonlet. David has also already seen the first Regal Darners (*Coryphaeschna ingens*) for the year.

For our part we documented a new location for Ashy Clubtail (*Gomphus lividus*; Grassy Slough WMA) and for Harlequin Darner (*Gomphaeschna furcillata*; Little River NWR); caught the first specimens of Harlequin Darner for the state (now pretty convinced the species breeds in Oklahoma); and thought we caught the state's first specimen of Banner Clubtail (*Gomphus apomyius*). Alas, Berlin Heck remains the only person to have seen the species in the state. On 4 May, just before rushing to Idabel to help lead a dragonfly tour for the Red Slough Birding Convention, we caught a tiny (39 mm) gomphid at the Glover River near North Pole (the location of the two state records for Banner Clubtail). We thought it looked odd for Banner Clubtail, but it wasn't until we got it under the microscope that we realized that it keyed out to and its genitalia indicate that it is an Ozark Clubtail (*Gomphus ozarkensis*). If true, this specimen, to our knowledge, is the smallest Ozark Clubtail on record—11 mm smaller than the "normal" size of 50–53 mm. On the other side of the spectrum, we collected a specimen in Osage County that keys mostly to Ozark Clubtail but it is 56.5 mm and it has a prominent yellow spot on top of abdominal segment 9. I've always said, Oklahoma sure is full of a lot of oddities!

Ozark Clubtail is one of the species we have been trying, thanks to funding from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC), to get a better handle on its status and distribution in the state. So far this season, we have added the species to one new county (Pittsburg). But...one gained and unfortunately one taken away... In our efforts to ensure the accuracy of Oklahoma records we reviewed some older records, one of which resulted in removing Ozark Clubtail from the Tulsa County list as we

feel (confirmed by Dennis Paulson) that a previously accepted record was actually a female Plains Clubtail (*Gomphus externus*). On a lighter note, another ODWC-funded study species, the Oklahoma Clubtail, has been added to six counties (Wagoner and Tulsa by Jim Arterburn and to McIntosh, Pittsburg, Haskell, and Le Flore by us)!

Also as part of our continued effort to “clean up” all county lists, we removed all non-Prince Baskettail (*Epitheca princeps*) records not supported by *superb* physical documentation. Many of you have been in on discussions regarding the difficulty in conclusively identifying Common Baskettails (*Epitheca cynosura*), Mantled Baskettails (*E. semiaquea*), Slender Baskettails (*E. costalis*), and Dot-winged Baskettails (*E. petechialis*). In some areas these species are readily distinguishable. In the Southern Great Plains, they are not so much. We still have much to learn about proper identification of these species. At their extreme forms, such as those pictured in various field guides, these species are easy to tell apart. However, there is much individual variation and the characteristics of the species overlap (taxonomists debate where to draw the line). To complicate matters more, in this part of the US we have “clear-winged” forms of Common and Dot-winged Baskettails that can look just like Slender Baskettail. All of these issues make it difficult, often impossible, to determine an individual’s identification from photos (keep in mind that it can even be difficult to id specimens). Until all of the taxonomic issues can be resolved please bear with us as we “unconfirm” your records submitted to Odonata Central. It is nothing personal, we are just erring on the conservative side. At some point we hope to revisit all of those photos and someday maybe a confident id can be put on them. Given all of the Baskettail woes we decided to remove all of our own sight records for non-Prince Baskettails across the state. Unless we had a clearcut individual in hand or we have a specimen, we removed those records from the county lists. Unfortunately this means some county lists dropped, but we feel this is the best approach as only confidently identified individuals will be counted and included in the known distribution of a given species.

Not to leave on a bum note... An interesting tidbit is that while identifying specimens from the Sam Noble Museum we came across what is likely the first record of Leonora’s Dancer (*Argia leonorae*) for Oklahoma. Recall that Tom Kompier found a male in Kiowa County on 18 July 2011 (Odonata Central record 333094), which we thought was just a vagrant to the state because it has not been found again despite multiple searches for the species. The Sam Noble specimen was collected by Ralph Bird in the Wichita Mountains area on 9 July 1932 and was originally identified as a Blue-ringed Dancer (*Argia sedula*). The mis-identification isn’t unexpected because Leonora’s Dancer was undescribed to science until 1994. We had high hopes of finding a Leonora’s Dancer in a museum collection somewhere, so it looks like we did! Nonetheless, we would like to get confirmation of our id of this specimen. We will keep you posted.

And finally, attached is a current county spreadsheet with all of the county totals and level of documentation for each species. Please let us know of county records and be sure to provide documentation (photos or specimens), including for species we only have “sight,” “in hand,” or “literature” records for.

Toodles,

Brenda and Michael