



8 August 2015

Dear OK Oders,

It is hard to believe that we are already into August. The dragon season has been a mixed one—rained out for much of spring but lots of good records this summer, including a new addition to the state!

Our season began auspiciously on 11 April, when we collected the first specimens for Oklahoma of the Twin-spotted Spiketail (*Cordulegaster maculata*; 2♂ specimens, SP1507 & 1508, photo at right), at Berlin Heck's property in McCurtain County, which is the only spot in the state that the species has ever been found at.



Late April and early May was particularly good for Atoka County. Boehler Seeps produced an early date for Azure Bluet (*Enallagma aspersum*, 25 April). But much more important and exciting, Boehler yielded the first records outside of McCurtain County for the Harlequin Darner (*Gomphaeschna furcillata*, 3♂ on 25 April and 1♂ on 1 May; photos [Odonata Central record OC 430571] and 2 specimens [Smith-Patten/Patten Collection specimen numbers SP1533 & SP1562]) and Ashy Clubtail (*Gomphus lividus*, 1 ♂ on 1 May; specimen, SP1536, and photo). Even more surprising was when we encountered Banner Clubtails (*Gomphus apomyius*, 2♂ and 1♀, 1-2 May, OC430739) along McGee Creek, below the spillway, at McGee Creek State Park. This spot is 58 miles (93 km) west of the Glover River, the only locality in the state where the species had been recorded. This record was the third for Oklahoma, and we obtained the first specimen for the state (SP1537)!

May also produced another interesting record, that of 2♂ Painted Skimmers (*Libellula semifasciata*, at a small pond E of Big Cedar, Le Flore Co., SP1533). This species had not been recorded in Oklahoma since 2010, and it is quite rare in the state, having been recorded barely more than a dozen times. The specimen we collected on 3 May was only the 5th for the state.

The rest of May was pretty much rained out. Oklahoma experienced severe flooding, which was good for refilling lakes, but bad for creeks and the odonates living along them. Creeks were scoured and it has taken some time for flood waters to subside and for odonate creek populations to recover.



Early June found us desperate to get in some fieldwork, so we headed out to the panhandle where, at least relative to central and eastern Oklahoma, less rain had fallen in May. On that trip we found the Cimarron River flowing again. Along the river we found 12♂ and 1♀ (with 1 pair!) of Rainbow Bluets (*Enallagma antennatum*, 3 June, 1 pair as SP1606, photo of a ♂ at left). Recall that the Rainbow Bluet had not been seen in the state since 1975 when we found a teneral ♂ on North Carrizo Creek, Cimarron County, on 26 May 2013 (SP587), and an adult ♂ at Shutlz WMA, Texas County, on the following day (SP594). The 3 June record

marks only the 8th time the species has been recorded in Oklahoma. As if that was not exciting enough, we discovered 4♂ Arroyo Bluets (*Enallagma praevarum*, 2 specimens, SP1604, SP1608) along the Cimarron River and North Carrizo Creek in Cimarron County on 3 June. This is only the 7th time the species has been recorded in the state. It was last recorded on 11 October 2002 (a vagrant ♂ at Ft. Sill, Comanche Co.; Colorado State University specimen), but it had not been seen in the panhandle since 1978!

But perhaps even more surprising was bumping into a male Pale-faced Clubskimmer (*Brechmorhoga mendax*) patrolling the Cimarron River that day. We were terribly bummed we were unable to catch this guy, but we took solace in that Brenda at least got some blurry photos (OC431499). This was only the second time a clubskimmer had been recorded in the panhandle (Bick & Bick 1957, *The Odonata of Oklahoma*), and the species had not been seen in the state since Vic Fazio had one at Ft. Sill on 31 August 2009 (OC315007).

A few days later we returned to southeastern Oklahoma. On 7 June, back at the ponds near Big Cedar in Le Flore County, we encountered Little Blue Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax minuscula*), marking only the 11th time the species has been found in Oklahoma. One interesting tidbit about the 2♂ we found is that they both had gray terminal appendages, as opposed to the "gleaming white" appendages that traditionally define the species. We have investigated variation in cerci color (manuscript in prep.), and surprise, surprise, individuals in Oklahoma and elsewhere at the western end of the species range are more likely to have the cerci dark, sometimes even black, than are individuals farther east, particularly those on the Atlantic coast. Later that same day, we had a fun time catching a mixed-species pair of a ♂ Atlantic Bluet (*Enallagma doubledayi*) and a ♀ Azure Bluet (SP1644), at a small pond at Pushmataha WMA in Pushmataha County.

July also had quite a few interesting records. The month started off with a new state record—Thornbush Dasher (*Micrathyria hagenii*, photo, right)—that Brenda found at the Nickel Preserve, Cherokee County, on 3 July (8♂, 2 collected, SP1695 & 1696, and photograph, OC432602). Michael saw 7♂ on 5 July (1 collected as SP1700). No females were ever found and no one else was able to re-find the species (despite a visit by Bill Carrell on 14 July and another by Jim Arterburn on 31 July). Perhaps the species blew in with Tropical Storm Bill and blew out with another storm, as one was found in Tennessee (!) a short time later (OC433072).



Other records from July include a new Adair County record and the first male specimen for Oklahoma of Amber-winged Spreadwing (*Lestes eurinus*, SP1688). Also quite interesting was a mixed-species pair of a ♂ Carolina Saddlebags (*Tramea carolina*) and a ♀ Black Saddlebags (*Tramea lacerata*) at McGee Creek State Park on 11 July and a bizarre male-male coupling of a ♂ Slaty Skimmer (*Libellula incesta*) and a ♂ Orange Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia xanthosoma*) at Lake Murray State Park in Love County on 24 July.

July also saw confirmation of a breeding population of the Seaside Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax berenice*) in Oklahoma. Remember that this species was first recorded in the state just last year (3 August), when we found but a single male at the salt marsh south of Eldorado, Jackson Co. (OC425536, SP1377). On 19 July at this same locale, and after much work under a brutal sun, Michael managed to find 7♂ and 2♀ and to obtain passable photographs of one of the two pairs he saw (OC433554). Michael also came across a probable breeding population of Clamp-tipped Emerald (*Somatochlora tenebrosa*). On 24 July, he had six individuals feeding at a spot in the Ouachita National Forest in McCurtain County (he collected 1♂ and 2♀, SP1727-1729). This encounter is the largest number of Clamp-tipped Emeralds ever reported in Oklahoma.

Other records of note include: a Desert Whitetail (*Plathemis subornata*) for Harmon Co.; Smoky Rubyspots (*Hetaerina titia*) at Atoka WMA, Atoka Co., new for that county as well as a “large” population (15♂, 3♀), perhaps the biggest extant population in the state, along Caddo Creek near Blue, Bryan Co.; the third state record of the Western Forktail (*Ischnura perparva*) in Cimarron Co.; documentation of a continuing tiny population of the Attenuated Bluet (*Enallagma daeckii*) in Le Flore Co. (first recorded there in June 2013, but not found last year; two males this year); and last but not least a Great Pondhawk (*Erythemis vesiculosa*) for Cotton Co. documented with photos shot through binoculars from a smart phone!

And for those of you who track county records, there have been 97 new county records so far in 2015, as well as 16 sight records upgraded to photo or specimen support (although there are five or six new sight records to partly offset the upgrades...oh well). As Brenda is now partially focused on tiger beetles, Michael has been conducting most of the ode surveys this season, so not surprisingly he is in the lead for county records (40 on his own and a party, with Brenda, in 34 others). Brenda got 10 on her own, Bill Carrell has 7, Jim Arterburn has 3, and Colby Farquhar, George Pierson, and Bryan Reynolds have 1 each. And although the year began with 13 county lists below 50 species, the total is now only eight counties!

On a somewhat down note, we offer a record correction. We reported last fall that Berlin Heck had inadvertently collected the first state record of the Allegheny River Cruiser (*Macromia alleghaniensis*), but it turns out that there was a mis-identified specimen at the Oklahoma State University collection that Brenda re-identified as *M. alleghaniensis*. That specimen was collected on 12 June 1962 in Delaware County. Sorry to steal your thunder, Berlin (he still has 6½ state records!), but on the bright side, we can all think of this as a lesson in the value of natural history collections.

And finally, we wanted to let you know that Abigail Mills is still hard at work teaching children about the beauty of nature by introducing them to dragonflies (photo, right). Keep up the great work, Abigail!

All the best,

Brenda and Michael

Brenda D. Smith-Patten & Michael A. Patten

