

3 June 2022

Greetings local Odors,

I know it has been a long time since my last update. Not surprisingly, I was quite exhausted from finalizing my book, *Dragonflies at a Biogeographical Crossroads: The Odonata of Oklahoma and Complexities Beyond Its Borders* ([link](#)), and then the pandemic slowed down fieldwork.

This year, fieldwork is back up to more of a normal pace. David Arbour and I have been out in full force in southeastern Oklahoma on our quest for the elusive Ouachita Spiketail (*Cordulegaster talaria*). For many years now, we've been looking for forested seeps, which are the breeding habitat for this species. We confirmed its continued presence at two such seeps—Arbour and Bee Seeps.



Pair of Aurora Damsels (*Chromagrion conditum*), 12 May 2022, Iron Spider Seep, McCurtain County, Oklahoma. Photo by David Arbour.

At a seep we found last year (Iron Spider Seep), we haven't encountered the spiketail yet, but we did find Aurora Damsels (*Chromagrion conditum*). This is the third location for that species since we first found it in Oklahoma in 2019.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, I popped into Arkansas to visit a seep that we found Ouachita Spiketail at in 2018. I missed seeing that spiketail, but I was fortunate enough to catch on video a Twin-spotted Spiketail (*Cordulegaster maculata*) ovipositing. One seep with two species of spiketails!

While out and about, David and I bumped into multiple Uhler's Sundragons (*Helocordulia uhleri*). This species was first found in Oklahoma in 1956 near Hochatown in southeastern Oklahoma. It wasn't seen again until 2020 when Alex Harman found a mating pair in the Boston Mts. in northeastern Oklahoma (more details in my [previous update](#)). For some reason, David and I started encountering them in the Ouachitas in the past year. We now have seven definite records for Oklahoma.

Male Uhler's Sundragon (*Helocordulia uhleri*). Captured and released on Beech Creek, McCurtain County, Oklahoma, 30 April 2022. Photo by Brenda D. Smith



Banner Clubtails (*Hylogomphus apomyius*) is another species of a confounding nature. The species was last reported in Oklahoma in 2016 from the Glover River. I was beginning to give up on seeing this clubtail again after numerous visits to the Glover and to the second known locale for the species, the dam spillway at McGee Creek State Park (only records from May 2015), proved unfruitful. But then, on 11 May I walked down to McGee Creek thinking I shouldn't give up quite yet, and low and behold, as I reached the creek's edge, there was my prize—a male Banner Clubtail! It took quiet some time to get

passable photos and then to catch him. After taking close-up photos, I let him go and proceeded to find three (4?) other males along the creek. A visit on 19 May resulted in seeing 2-3 males. That visit extended the state's late date by four days.

Left: Male Banner Clubtail (*Hylogomphus apomyius*), McGee Creek State Park, Atoka County, Oklahoma, 19 May 2022. Photo by Brenda D. Smith.



Right: Regal Darner (*Coryphaeschna ingens*), Ouachita National Forest, east side of Broken Bow Lake, McCurtain County, Oklahoma, 12 May 2022. Photo by David Arbour.

On a final Spring odonate note, David and I had a crazy record that I still have a hard time believing, but fortunately David got photographic proof. While out in the National Forest on the east side of Broken Bow Lake, we had a darner whip by us and then hang up in a tree right above David's head. Initially I wasn't able to put my finger on why I couldn't just pass it off as a Swamp Darner (*Epiaeschna heros*), an expected darner of that area, but once I got my binoculars on it a bell went off—Regal Darner (*Coryphaeschna ingens*)! Well away from other records of the species by 30+ miles and completely out of expected habitat, we literally could not believe our eyes. Yahoo!!





Golden-banded Skipper (*Autochton cellus*), Ouachita National Forest, Bee Seep, McCurtain County, Oklahoma, 12 May 2022.  
Photo by David Arbour.

And for those interested in rare butterflies, David and I found five adult Golden-banded Skippers (*Autochton cellus*) at Bee Seep. David first found this species there in 2019.

The Frosted Elfin (*Callophrys irus hadros*) Project continues. This year wasn't quite as successful as last year when the Frosted Elfin teams extended known sites for the species in Oklahoma from nine to 34, but we still had a good year. In 2022 we continue to fill in the gaps and monitor known populations. The season got a late start in the western part of its range, which may explain why mid instar caterpillars were still out on 20 May and we had a late instar on 1 June.

Oh, and I almost forgot...part of the reason I'm writing to you today is in celebration of the 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first major collection of dragonflies in the state. Technically, that collection was taken just before statehood, starting on 3 June 1907, in Indian Territory, but it is all part of the long history of odonatology in our area. For more details, see the *History of Oklahoma Odonatology* chapter in the book and a recent article by Jena Donnell, titled [Here Be Dragons](#) (linked).

I wish you all happy ode (and other critter) hunting for the summer.

*Best,  
Brenda "Bee" Smith :)*

PS, the Dragonfly Society of the Americas meeting that was scheduled for Oklahoma in 2020, is now scheduled for 2023 (fingers crossed!)