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Dear OK Odors,

This update is brought to you by Michael A. Patten . . .

It's official: Florida has bit the dust. That state's list is a mere 171 native species, including one, *Orthemis schmidtii*, a tropical species that lacks an English name, only tentatively on the state list—males that more-or-less match this species outwardly have been photographed in southern Florida twice, but there are no specimens to confirm the identification, and there is a undescribed species of *Orthemis* in the Greater Antilles (see Dennis Paulson's eastern field guide) that may account for the records. (Florida also is home to the continent's only non-native dragonfly, the Scarlet Skimmer, *Crocothemis servilia*, but we don't count such things in tallies.) In any case, as you will doubtless recall, with the addition of the Texas Emerald (*Somatochlora margarita*), Oklahoma tied Florida's total on 22 June. In the past week or so Oklahoma has climbed not one but two species ahead. Yes, there are now 173 species known from the state!

Species no. 172 was a frustrating ♂ Tawny Pennant (*Brachymesia herbida*) at a small, perennial pond at Waurika Wildlife Management Area, COTTON, on 1 October, frustrating because even though it was under observation for several hours, it spent most of its time on the wing, and when it did perch it stayed well out from shore. Indeed, when first spotted it was hurtling about the pond as if attempting to establish a territory, but it was hassled routinely by various other species, including by multiple ♂ Four-spotted Pennants (*B. gravida*), and seemed to be excessively "nervous." Eventually I obtained clear enough views to identify it to species well before it ever landed. Once it did land, finally, the identification was easy—thanks to Swarovski 10 × 42 binoculars. (Without them, it is difficult to envision what would have become of this record.) Extensive efforts to obtain close-up photographs, let alone a specimen, failed utterly. Fortunately, it is a distinctive species, and so even the distant photos obtained are sufficient to nail down the identification (Figure 1). For several years now this tropical species has been on my short list of "next odonate in Oklahoma." In the United States, it is found normally only in southern Florida and southern Texas, but it has a propensity to wander: there are multiple records for eastern New Mexico and the trans-Pecos of Texas, one for eastern Texas, and even one for Nebraska, of a specimen collected on 2 August 1914!

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Figure 1. Oklahoma's first Tawny Pennant (*Brachymesia herbida*), a ♂ at Waurika Wildlife Management Area, COTTON, 1 October 2017. A dozen Four-spotted Pennants (*B. grandidis*) were present as well. This ♂ was like that species in shape (e.g., a long, thin abdomen) and behavior (e.g., wings held above the horizontal when perched) but was smaller in direct comparison. The wing pattern is distinctive: dark patches on the wing of a Four-spotted Pennant are blackish (♂) or brown (♀ and immature), are present solely in the outer half of the wing (between the nodus and the wingtip), and contrast with bold white pterostigma, whereas on the Tawny Pennant the dark patches are always brownish, are more diffuse, are concentrated between the thorax and the nodus, and do not contrast with the dark pterostigma. As luck would have it, the wing pattern is visible in the best of the photographs (see the blow-up, below). Also visible are the yellowish abdomen, black mid-dorsal stripe that widened laterally at the tip (well, the tip is visible in the photos, but, alas, the mid-dorsal stripe is not too well, although a hint of it and the black triangular extensions laterally can be discerned in the blow-up), and the brown thorax. See also Odonata Central no. 473523.



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Species no. 173 was far less frustrating but far more shocking—it was on no one’s short list of potential strays to the state. A ♀ Black Pondhawk (*Erythemis attala*) was found at Beaver Dunes State Park, BEAVER, on 6 October. It was in a narrow riparian belt along (an apparently) spring-fed creek that flows into the small lake or large pond at the park’s entrance. I spotted it perched atop a fallen log, facing directly toward me, and was perplexed by a dark, mid-sized dragonfly with obvious small dark patches at the base of the hindwings. A Checkered Setwing (*Dythemis fugax*) flashed briefly in mind, but the wing spots were much too small, and what was visible of the thorax seemed to be wholly dark. It was a stumper because neither the sides of the thorax nor the abdomen were visible . . . until it briefly raised its abdomen to reveal yellow and black bands. At this point it was clear that this was a tropical pondhawk, yet there seemed to be no way to capture it because it sat atop a log, where a net could not close over it. Yet just before the what-do-I-do-now agony took hold, she flitted up and away. I do not mind bragging that it was a miraculously catch: without a thought, I executed a perfect swing to nab it out of the air before it disappeared. Once in hand, the rather short, thick abdomen and blackish thorax—see Figure 2—eliminated a ♀ Pin-tailed Pondhawk (*E. plebeja*), a species that remains on my short list to occur in the state one day.

Figure 2. Oklahoma’s first Black Pondhawk (*Erythemis attala*; SP 2514), a ♀ at Beaver Dunes State Park, BEAVER, on 6 October 2017. This tropical species is rare in the United States had been recorded no nearer to Oklahoma than Lubbock, Texas, and southeastern-most New Mexico.



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Another recent stunner was a ♀ Filagree Skimmer (*Pseudoleon superbus*) where North Carrizo Creek joins the Cimarron River near Kenton, CIMARRON, on 7 October (SP 2521, OC 473886). There had been only one previous record for Oklahoma, of a ♂ Vic Fazio photographed twice during its stay at Moneka Park, JEFFERSON, 30 September–5 October 2008 (OC 284013, 284120). Technically, then, the CIMARRON record provided a new late date for Oklahoma. Other 2017 late dates, so far, were provided by a ♂ Sulphur-tipped Clubtail (*Phanogomphus militaris*) on 4 September (late by >2 weeks) in MAJOR (SP 2487), a ♂ Two-striped Forcetail (*Aphylla williamsoni*) on 20 September in MCCURTAIN (David Arbour, OC 473067), and both a ♂ Tule Bluet (*Enallagma carunculatum*; SP 2518) and a ♂ and ♀ Plains Forktail (*Ischnura damula*) on 7 October in CIMARRON (SP 2520 and OC 473885, respectively).

Additional records of note since our last update include:

1) Well-covered CLEVELAND had its first Slender Spreadwing (*Lestes rectangularis*) since 1930 when Bryan Reynolds photographed a ♂ at Lexington Wildlife Management on 12 September (OC 473091).

2) The westernmost records for Oklahoma of both the Orange Shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia xanthosoma*), a ♂ photographed by Robert Sanders at Black Kettle Lake, ROGER MILLS, 20 July (OC 472452), and the Blue-faced Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum ambiguum*), collected and photo'd in hand at Beaver Dunes State Park, BEAVER, 6 October (SP 2515, OC 473883). Also far west were two ♂ Comet Darners (*Anax longipes*) at Lake R. C. Longmire, GARVIN, 8 July (SP 2447, OC 471170), a ♂ Dragonhunter (*Hagenius brevistylus*) along North Fork Walnut Creek near Blanchard, MCCLAIN, 15 July (SP 2453, OC 471171), and a ♂ Royal River Cruiser (*Macromia taeniolata*) at Taylor Lake, GRADY, 20 August (SP 2474).

3) A ♀ Western Pondhawk (*Erythemis collocata*) photographed by Bill Carrell at Black Mesa State Park, CIMARRON, 20 August (OC 470944) provided one of only a handful of well-documented records for Oklahoma. Other scarce species noted recently include up to 5 ♂—one of the highest counts for the state—Shadow Darners (*Aeshna umbrosa*) at Doby Springs, HARPER, 6–8 October (OC 473882), with a ♂ collected at Beaver Dunes State Park on 8 October (SP 2522, OC 473887) a first for BEAVER. Likewise, a ♂ Cherry-faced Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum internum*) photographed by Bill Carrell along South Carrizo Creek near Black Mesa State Park on 7 October was a first for CIMARRON. Lastly, single ♂ Pale-faced Clubskimmers (*Brechmorhoga mendax*) were along Lariat Creek near Geary, BLAINE, 2 September (SP 2479, a county first), and along Griever Creek north of Chester, MAJOR, 4 September.

4) The Hyacinth Glider (*Miathyria marcella*) invasion at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, MCCURTAIN, that began in June continued, with David Arbour reporting a high count of 40 individuals on 19 September and 11 still present on 10 October (OC 473941). He also caught a ♀

in Broken Bow on 9 October (OC 4739410).). In our last update we encouraged folks to watch for this species elsewhere in the state. Well, it happened! A ♂ was collected near Nuyaka, OKMULGEE, 23 September (SP 2509, OC 473237). The species is now known from a whopping four counties in Oklahoma.

5) It has become a near-annual tradition for small numbers of the Striped Saddlebags (*Tramea calverti*) to appear in late summer at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, MCCURTAIN, so why would 2017 be any different? David Arbour noted several individuals 25 July–21 September (OC 468213, 469484, 472538, 473083). Far more unusual was a ♂ photographed near Schuler, OKMULGEE, 23 September (OC 473236).

I close with an astonishing report. Oklahoma's first Seaside Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax berenice*) was a ♂ found at the "Salt Plains" near Eldorado, JACKSON, 3 August 2014 (SP 1377, OC 425536). At the time Bee and I figured it to be a vagrant, even though the habitat seemed suitable for a population. I was thus pleasantly surprised to find 7 ♂ and 2 ♀, including a tandem pair, at this site on 19 July 2015 (OC 433554), and individuals were found subsequently at Altus, JACKSON, 24 July 2016 (OC 451280), likely at Waurika Wildlife Management Area, COTTON, 18 June 2016, and, stunningly, at Norman, CLEVELAND, 30 May 2017 (OC 463299; see our June update from this year). From where did these strays come? Well, there is a thriving population at the "Salt Plains" south of Eldorado: on 16 July there were 32 ♂ (1 at SP 2457) and 13 ♀ (1 as SP 2458) in a relatively small area along the main (dirt) north–south road through the area.

Happy hunting,

