

Volume 2015 Number 3
Fall 2015

Bulletin of the
**Oregon
Entomological
Society**

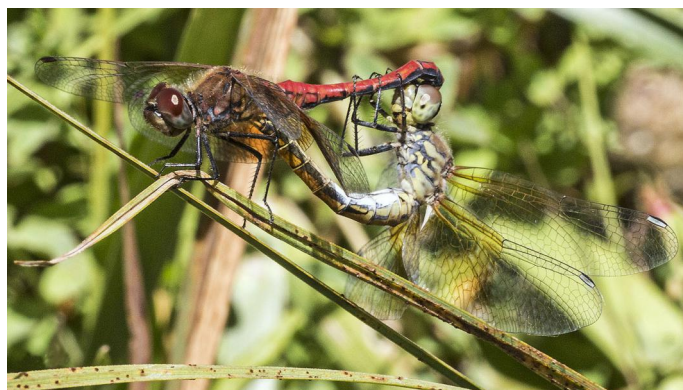
The 2015 *Aeshna* Blitz: Back to Alvord

Jim Johnson

The sixteenth annual *Aeshna* Blitz—an informal gathering of odonatists at some location in the wilds of Oregon—was held in the Alvord Basin on 21–23 August. This area on the east side of Steens Mountain and the Pueblo Mountains is rugged, remote, arid, and typically quite warm during the summer, but many odonates call it home thanks to a number of hot springs and their associated wetlands, as well as alkaline lakes and perennial streams on the mountain slopes. It's a favorite area of Oregon's odonatists because of several southwestern species which reach the northern extent of their ranges in this corner of the state.

This year's crew was pretty thin, number-wise, with only five of us making the trek: Steve Berliner, Sherry Daubert, Jim Johnson, Cary Kerst, and Steve Valley. There were fewer Steve's than usual, but the small group meant a respectable 40% of participants sported the forename.

Four of us—all but Steve B., met on our way through central Oregon on the 20th, and we visited a couple of ponds east of Bend. None of us had checked these ponds for odonates before, and considering the paucity of publicly accessible wetlands in the area, they were definitely worth a look. Reynolds Pond, just outside the Oregon Badlands Wilderness, was surprisingly full of water—especially considering this summer's drought conditions, but its proximity to a small canal of water diverted from the Deschutes River probably had something to do with that. There were no surprises, but Reynolds held a lot of odonate activity, and I will surely visit again. Mayfield Pond, just a few miles to the west, was similar in odonate activity, but the road conditions make it less appealing for repeat visits.



Mating *Sympetrum semicinctum* (Band-winged Meadowhawk) at Mayfield Pond near Bend on August 20. Photo by Cary Kerst.



Borax Lake. Photo by Jim Johnson.



Steve Berliner (in grass) and Cary Kerst (at water) at Twin Springs. Photo by Jim Johnson.



Plathemis subornata (Desert Whitetail) at Mickey Hot Springs. Photo by Jim Johnson.

After spending that night at Mann Lake on the east side of Steens Mountain, our first stop was Mickey Hot Springs. As an undeveloped BLM site with bubbling cauldrons of mud and hissing vents of steam, it's a fun place to visit. Throw in some odonates, and it's a thrill. Most of the odonate activity is at a marshy pool where hot water drains to. Presumably, the water cools enough to support a load of aquatic insects by the time it gets there. There were several male *Plathemis subornata* (Desert Whitetail) chasing each other over this pool, and later when it warmed up more there were several pairs of *Libellula composita* (Bleached Skimmer) ovipositing in tandem. As usual, there were plenty of *Argia alberta* (Paiute Dancer) and *Ischnura denticollis* (Black-fronted Forktail) in the dense sedge vegetation.

The next stop was Borax Lake, but by the time we got there it was very windy which always puts a damper on odonate activity. There

were one or two *Libellula comanche* (Comanche Skimmer), one *L. saturata* (Flame Skimmer)—uncommon in this part of the state, and one *Pantala flavescens* (Wandering Glider) which is a rather scarce visitor to Oregon. Here we noticed that dragonflies were frequent prey of *Argiope trifasciata* which seemed to be more numerous than usual. *Erythemis collocata* (Western Pondhawk) seemed to be the most common victim, but additional species were noted.

After a brief stop in the town of Fields to load up on necessities, we pulled off the road at Little Cottonwood Creek about eight miles south of town. It was late in the afternoon, and there was barely a trickle of water so we didn't see any odonates, but the condition of the stream and its riparian vegetation thanks to cattle grazing was disheartening. We moved on. We arrived at Willow Creek Hot Springs, set up camp, and still had enough daylight to



Argiope trifasciata with captured Erythemis collocata (Western Pondhawk) at Borax Lake. Photo by Jim Johnson.



Loggerhead Shrike at Mickey Hot Springs. Photo by Jim Johnson.

net a few aeshnids cruising the adjacent wetland. *Aeshna palmata* (Paddle-tailed Darner), *A. interrupta* (Variable Darner) and *Rhionaeschna multicolor* (Blue-eyed Darner) were all captured for in-hand inspection.

The next morning, after Steve Berliner's traditional pancake and sausage breakfast for everyone present, we visited Twin Springs. There were more of the "Alvord specialties" here: *Argia alberta*, *Ischnura denticollis*, *Plathemis subornata*, and a few *Libellula comanche*, as well as a number of the more widespread species. Between the hot springs, their well-vegetated "stream", and the impounded pond with cattails and tules, this location typically ranks as one of the more diverse in odonate species richness. It was at this point that we decided to draw a close on this year's *Aeshna* Blitz and we parted ways.

We ended up with a total of 31 species of odonates—12 damselflies and 19 dragonflies. It's not an impressive number, and there were no surprises this year, but the *Aeshna* Blitz is always a fun gathering with great friends—especially in a part of the state with such awesome scenery.

Damselflies

- Lestes congener*, Spotted Spreadwing
- Amphiagrion abbreviatum*, Western Red Damsel
- Argia alberta*, Paiute Dancer
- Argia vivida*, Vivid Dancer
- Enallagma annexum*, Northern Bluet
- Enallagma boreale*, Boreal Bluet
- Enallagma carunculatum*, Tule Bluet
- Enallagma civile*, Familiar Bluet
- Enallagma clausum*, Alkali Bluet
- Ischnura cervula*, Pacific Forktail
- Ischnura denticollis*, Black-fronted Forktail
- Ischnura perparva*, Western Forktail

Dragonflies

- Aeshna interrupta*, Variable Darner
- Aeshna palmata*, Paddle-tailed Darner
- Anax junius*, Common Green Darner
- Rhionaeschna multicolor*, Blue-eyed Darner
- Erythemis collocata*, Western Pondhawk
- Libellula comanche*, Comanche Skimmer
- Libellula composita*, Bleached Skimmer
- Libellula forensis*, Eight-spotted Skimmer
- Libellula saturata*, Flame Skimmer
- Pachydiplax longipennis*, Blue Dasher
- Pantala flavescens*, Wandering Glider
- Plathemis subornata*, Desert Whitetail
- Sympetrum corruptum*, Variegated Meadowhawk
- Sympetrum costiferum*, Saffron-winged Meadowhawk
- Sympetrum danae*, Black Meadowhawk
- Sympetrum internum*, Cherry-faced Meadowhawk
- Sympetrum pallipes*, Striped Meadowhawk
- Sympetrum semicinctum*, Band-winged Meadowhawk
- Tramea lacerata*, Black Saddlebags



Western Pygmy Blue at Mickey Hot Springs. Photo by Cary Kerst.



Tandem pair of *Libellula composita* (Bleached Skimmer) flying and male *Erythemis collocata* (Western Pondhawk) flying nearby at Mickey Hot Springs. Photo by Jim Johnson.



Argia alberta (Paiute Dancer) at Borax Lake. Photo by Jim Johnson.

Wanted: Observations of *Tramea onusta* (Red Saddlebags) in Oregon Ron Lyons

Tramea onusta (Red Saddlebags) is a moderately large, red dragonfly with strong red coloration in its hind wings. While this dragonfly is widely distributed throughout the country, it had not been recorded in the Pacific Northwest until this year. In California it had been restricted to the southern part of the state, occasionally reaching farther north into Sonoma County, just north of San Francisco, although it had been recorded farther north near the California border in Washoe County, Nevada. This year was unusual. By mid-summer *T. onusta* had been found much farther north in California—Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Eventually it reached well into Oregon. (Visit <http://donatacentral.org> for a dot map of its distribution and details of the individual records.)

On a trip up the coast on July 29, Jim Johnson and Steve Valley made the first observations of *Tramea onusta* in Oregon. They found several individuals in Curry County at the pond close to the ocean in Arizona Beach State Park. Since then *T. onusta* has been reported from Coos County also right along the coast and inland from Jackson and Benton Counties. The records so far are rather spotty.

If you have, or know someone who has, unreported observations of *Tramea onusta* in Oregon or even Northern California, please contact Jim Johnson <jt_johnson@comcast.net>.

Similar Species: A number of dragonflies found in Oregon are red with red areas of their wings. The most common are various species of *Sympetrum* (meadowhawks). These dragonflies are smaller than *T. onusta* and spend a lot of time perched, mainly on vegetation. *Libellula saturata* (Flame Skimmer) is probably the

easiest one to confuse with *T. onusta*. *L. saturata* is similar in size but has lighter colored, orange wing markings that are present in both sets of wings and extend outwards uniformly from the body. While *L. saturata* is a strong flyer, it will often perch on vegetation even on bright sunny days. The red area on the wings of *T. onusta* occurs only on the hind wings, is a brighter red, and forms an irregular patch separated in part from the inner edge of the wing. *T. onusta* tends to be a strong, persistent flyer on bright sunny days. Its slightly larger relative, *Tramea lacerata* (Black Saddlebags), has a dark body (the female has large yellow spots on her abdomen), and a similar irregular patch on its hind wings, but in this case the patch is black. In flight, both *Trameas* look like they are carrying large dark packages on their backs.



Libellula saturata (Flame Skimmer) photographed at Borax Lake, Harney County, Oregon on the Aeshna Blitz. Photo by Jim Johnson.



Tramea onusta (Red Saddlebags) photographed at the New River Area of Critical Environmental Concern in Coos County, Oregon on August 29, 2015. Photo by Ron Lyons.



Tramea lacerata (Black Saddlebags) photographed at Bruneau Dunes State Park, Idaho. Note the clear area between the black patch in the wing and the inner edge of the wing. Photo by Ron Lyons.

Western Monarch Butterfly Habitat Suitability Model Data *Ashley Taylor*

Earlier this year the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Xerces Society partnered and began work on a Western Monarch Butterfly Habitat Suitability Model (see the Summer issue of the Bulletin for more details). The goals of the project are to get a better understanding of where western Monarchs are breeding, as well as to document the distribution of the Monarch's milkweed host plants. The resulting model will be used to inform western Monarch conservationists as to the best locations to begin much needed habitat conservation projects.

Now that the field season is winding down, we're gearing up to start trial runs of the model. We've spent the summer compiling and collecting milkweed and Monarch data for the eleven states west of the Rocky Mountains: AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, and WY. However, the more data we can gather, the stronger the model will be. This is where we need your help. We hope that you've had a chance to get outside this summer, get your hands dirty, and perhaps collect some Monarch and milkweed data! If you were able to record any milkweed and/or Monarch observations we would really appreciate if you would share those with us.

We encourage folks to submit milkweed and/or Monarch observations via the USFWS excel spreadsheet or the Xerces Society Milkweed Survey, both of which can be found at <http://www.xerces.org/milkweedsurvey/>.

In the hopes of capturing as much of the 2015 field data as possible, while still ensuring enough time for model results to inform 2016 planning, we've set a **final data submission date of Monday, November 2, 2015**. So if you would like to contribute to this modeling project, please report your observations by that date. If you choose to fill out the excel spreadsheet, please send it to Ashley Taylor at [<ashley.taylor@xerces.org>](mailto:ashley.taylor@xerces.org) or Liz Cruz at [<liz_cruz@fws.gov>](mailto:liz_cruz@fws.gov). Please feel free to direct any questions to either Ashley or Liz.

Thank you for your time and valuable contributions to the the success of this project and Monarch conservation.



Ron Lyons

Life and Death on a Patch of Sand *Ron Lyons*

This summer while I was out looking for dragonflies and damselflies, I came across a small sandy patch with the burrows of a number of tiger beetle larvae, probably *Cicindela oregona* (Western Tiger Beetle). While I watched, a damselfly, *Enallagma* sp. (probably *E. annexum*, Northern Bluet), landed on the sand. Its abdomen was quickly pulled down into one of the larval burrows. During the next hour, the doomed damselfly fought off 3 frontal attacks by roaming *C. oregona* adults (see figure) before succumbing to an attack from behind by a mating pair, the female of which decapitated the damselfly. The pair moved off while the female consumed the head and then returned to the corpse, which by this time had been partially consumed by several other adult tiger beetles. Presumably during this time, the abdomen of the damselfly was also being consumed by the larva in its burrow.



The damselfly used its legs and front wings to fight off the attack by the adult tiger beetle. The long thin abdomen of the damselfly is not visible because it has been pulled down into the burrow of a larval tiger beetle. Photo by Ron Lyons.

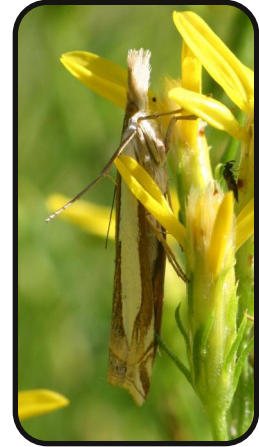
37th Northwest Lepidopterists' Workshop

When: Saturday and Sunday, 17 and 18 October 2015

Where: Cordley Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon

Hosts: Drs. Paul Hammond and David McCorkle

Sponsored by the Oregon State Arthropod Collection and the OSU Department of Integrative Biology



Saturday Program, 17 October

9:00 AM Register at Cordley Hall, room 2113 (east wing). No fee.

Workshop Preview: Arrange study specimens, etc. Cordley Hall room 1070 (west wing)

10:00 Welcome and announcements, Cordley Hall room 2113 (east wing)

10:30 Activity reports: new state and county records, meeting reports, book announcements, etc.*

12:30 PM Group picture. Location to be announced.

12:45 Lunch at local restaurants.

2:00 Workshop session: Cordley Hall room 1070. (Preceded by a brief orientation to this year's groups if requested.)

Groups of emphasis for this year:

Butterflies: *Callophrys* sensu lato (Green Hairstreaks, Elfins, Cedar and Mistletoe Hairstreaks), *Limenitis* (Admirals)

Moths: *Catocala*, Saturniidae, overview of micromoths

Also specimens of any Lepidoptera from recent field trips or of special interest.

Information exchange and specimen gift exchange is encouraged.

2:00-3:00pm Microlepidoptera Workshop led by Mark Hitchcox & Richard Worth in Cordley Hall room 1064.

Participants will be introduced to the diversity and techniques associated with this often overlooked group.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own specimens. Space/scopes are limited so **pre-registration is strongly encouraged**. You may register at <<http://osac.oregonstate.edu/PNWLepWorkshop/microleps>>.

3:00-4:00 Oregon State Arthropod Collection Open House featuring the Bob Hardwick butterfly collection, donated earlier this year by Jean Hardwick of Gig Harbor Washington.

5:00 Workshop session conclusion

5:30 Buffet dinner at Izzy's Restaurant, Corvallis

7:15 Ag 4001: Brief planning session followed by the evening lecture:

Paul Hammond & Dave McCorkle – Hybridization study of Fritillaries (*Speyeria*)

9:30 Meeting recessed until Sunday morning.



*Please bring your NW collecting records with you in written form. Dana Ross will put them into a master file and send any significant county records to Jon Shepard for inclusion in the Lepidopterists' Society Season Summary (include state, county, location and date, and if available, range & township or lat/long coordinates as well as elevation). Ann Potter is also soliciting records especially for Washington State.

Program continued next page...

Program continued...

Sunday Program, 18 October

8:30 AM Workshop session resumed, Cordley Hall room 1070 (west wing)

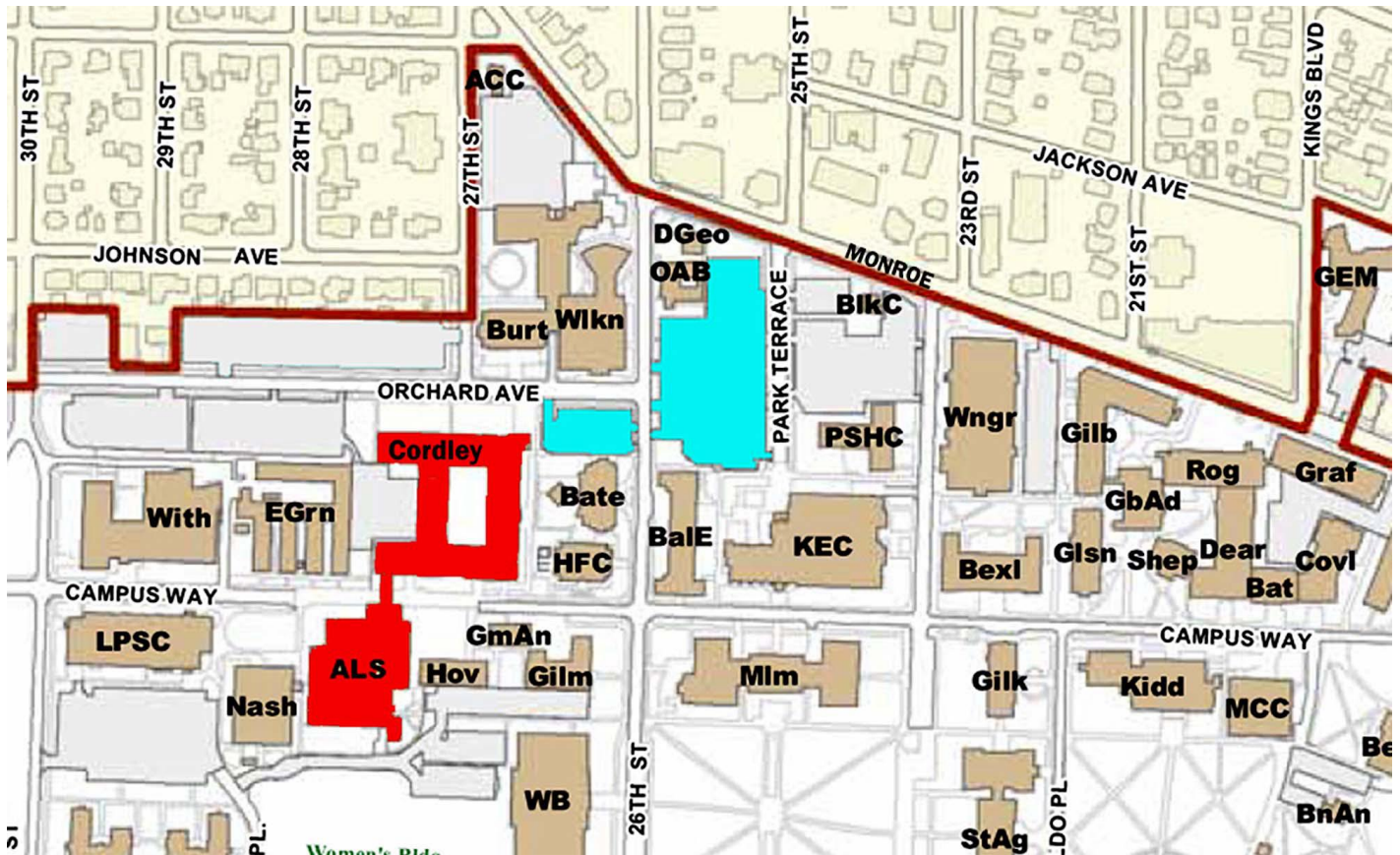
10:00 Field trip reports and other contributions. PowerPoint, etc. Cordley Hall room 2113 (east wing)

This is your opportunity to contribute a presentation on or related to Lepidoptera, e.g. field trip report, favorite images, etc.

Please notify Paul Hammond prior to this meeting of your equipment needs and if your presentation is likely to exceed 10 minutes.

“12:00” Meeting concluded

The map below shows Cordley Hall and the ALS Building in red. Most of the meeting takes place in Cordley Hall. The Saturday evening presentation in Ag 4001 is on the 4th floor of the ALS building, reached from the 3rd floor of Cordley via a sky bridge.



The smaller of the two parking areas colored in turquoise is the one favored by participants as it is the one closest to the weekend entrance for Cordley Hall. Access this lot via Orchard Ave or Park Terrace and through the larger parking lot. Street parking is also available along Orchard Ave.

For a full campus map, visit <http://oregonstate.edu/campusmap/> and click on “PDF Map” at the bottom of the page.

The latest information can be accessed at <http://osac.oregonstate.edu/PNWLEPWorkshop>.