



# THE BOGHAUNTER

Occasional News About the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Vermont

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Spring 2005

## The Hunt For Another Boghaunter

### Or How To Have Fun In The Fen

By Bryan Pfeiffer

**K**nee-deep in icy water in Shaftsbury, Mike Blust stopped in his mucky tracks. A small dragonfly had floated from the fen. Mike's pulse quickened because late April, when the ice has just left the wetlands, is when *Williamsonia lintneri* (Ringed Boghaunter) would be expected to take flight in Vermont.

Mike was in the right place at the right time. But this was the wrong bug. This first odonate of the season in Vermont turned out to be *Leucorrhinia hudsonica* (Hudsonian Whiteface) — a reliably early flyer in Vermont. This ambitious individual, flying on April 29, was indeed early.

Nevertheless, the search for *W. lintneri* began in earnest in Vermont this spring. This exceedingly rare dragonfly brought Mike and me to some wonderful wetlands last month. Now that its congener, *W. fletcheri* (Ebony Boghaunter) has

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Glenn Corbiere

*Williamsonia lintneri* (Ringed Boghaunter)

## New York Begins Odonate Survey

By Paul Novak

Here's another reason to ♥ NY. The New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) has launched a statewide odonate survey.

The chief objective will be to build upon the county-level data in order to document the distribution of all odonate species occurring in New York. As of spring of 2004 the average number of species recorded per county was approximately 57, but we know there are far more than that for all counties.

Additional project objectives include: evaluating the relative abundance of *Enallagma pictum* (Scarlet Bluet), *Enallagma*

*recurvatum* (Pine Barrens Bluet), and *Enallagma minusculum* (Little Bluet), all state-listed as Threatened, on Long Island, and directing some survey efforts to locations having potential for the federally listed *Somatochlora hineana* (Hine's Emerald).

All three *Enallagma* species are currently known from fewer than 10 sites on Long Island and are threatened by groundwater withdrawal, off-road vehicle use of coastal plain ponds, introduction of fish to ponds, and other factors. New York State was identified in the Hine's Emerald Recovery Plan as one of several states with dolomite regions that could support this species.

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# The Hunt for Another Boghaunter

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been discovered in Vermont (THE BOGHAUNTER, Vol. 1 No. 1), we're hoping to go two for two on the genus.

Mike and I have been searching poor and intermediate gramminoid fens. Here in Vermont, these tend to be peatlands with some surface-water flow (unlike the stagnant, highly-acidic waters of bogs) and therefore higher in nutrients.

Our approach began with the bog and fen dataset available from the Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program, which has surveyed and mapped many of the state's peatlands. Mike and I also gathered conventional wisdom and literature on *W. lintneri*. And we ranked each wetland for its potential.

Our ongoing intent is to visit likely sites twice — once in early May and once in mid to late May. We began this year in southwestern Vermont. For each visit, we noted climatic conditions, bog mat temperature, pH, and other site data, as

well what other odes were flying.

The early visits this year, while not producing the prize, nevertheless generated some important data on early ode emergence in Vermont. During our busy day frequenting fens on May 6, for example, we located small numbers of exuvia, teneral and a adults. *Ishnura verticalis* (Eastern Forktail) and *Leucorrhinia hudsonica* (Hudsonian Whiteface) were already flying in low numbers. But we also located a single teneral *Chromagrion conditum* (Aurora Damsel) and a few *Aeshna* skins, which we assumed were *Basiaesha janata* (Springtime Darner).

But, alas, no *W. lintneri*. By May 21, I was investigating Vermont's transitional boreal habitat in the state's Northeastern Highlands. On that sunny, promising day, I found a grand total of zero ode species.

Then the rains came. From May 22 until presstime for this issue of The Boghaunter (June 1), Vermont had few decent field days. It put the brakes on our

efforts this year. (Plus, I began to switch from fens to bogs in order to find another unrecorded species for the state [albeit a member of a lesser order] — *Callophrys lanoraieensis* [Bog Elfin].)

Even so, with bog mat temperatures exceeding 60 °F, little was flying in Vermont by the end of May. Here's what was on the wing as of June 1:

*Chromagrion conditum* (Aurora Damsel)  
*Coenagrion resolutum* (Taiga Bluet)  
*Enallagma boreale* (Boreal Bluet)  
*Enallagma vernale* (Vernal Bluet)  
*Ishnura verticalis* (Eastern Forktail)  
*Anax junius* (Common Green Darner)  
*Gomphus spicatus* (Dusky Clubtail)  
*Epithea canis* (Beaverpond Baskettail)  
*Libellula julia* (Chalk-fronted Corporal)  
*L. quadrimaculata* (Four-spotted Skimmer)  
*Leucorrhinia glacialis* (Crimson-ringed Whiteface)  
*Leucorrhinia hudsonica* (Hudsonian Whiteface)  
*Leucorrhinia intacta* (Dot-tailed Whiteface)

Bryan Pfeiffer, a consulting biologist, is editor and publisher of THE BOGHAUNTER.

## NY Begins Ode Atlas

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The success of this project will depend heavily on the participation of interested volunteers, many of whom are expected to be new to the study of these fascinating insects. It is expected that some interested project participants will be active mainly in their local areas, while others can be directed to counties that are currently under represented with respect to species lists or to specific habitats for infrequently recorded species. Overall, on a statewide basis, we expect to direct more intensive sampling to selected habitats, areas with expected high odonate diversity, and habitats of particularly rare species such as bogs, fens, seeps, and larger river habitats.

We fully expect to add at least a couple of species to the New York State list (check [www.odonatacentral.com](http://www.odonatacentral.com) for the likely possibilities). Lastly, it is expected that the results of the New York Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey will be presented in a variety of formats, including a high-quality book and

electronic-based files for use by conservation biologists and planners at the completion of the project.

Survey protocols and other details are nearly developed and will be posted on the NY Natural Heritage Program website ([www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/heritage](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/heritage)) as soon as they are finalized. We will utilize an access based shareware database that will be provided to participants allowing volunteers to enter the data from their surveys, print labels for specimens, and record their time and mileage (to meet project federal matching fund requirements).

If you expect to be spending time in New York this summer looking for odes, or want to hop over the border for a survey or two, please contact Paul Novak at: [pgnovak@dec.state.ny.us](mailto:pgnovak@dec.state.ny.us) or (518) 402-8953 to see how you can participate.

The NYNHP is a partnership between New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and The Nature Conservancy.

THE BOGHAUNTER is an occasional newsletter about the dragonflies and damselflies of Vermont. It is available for no charge, although contributions to help offset postage and printing are welcome.

CONTRIBUTIONS to THE BOGHAUNTER can take two forms: financial and editorial. The newsletter appears two or three times per year. Even a donation of \$5 to \$10 would help offset printing and postage expenses, which are borne entirely by the editor. Your articles, photos, and ideas are welcome as well. The next issue should appear in June.

THE BOGHAUNTER is on the web in color at: [www.wingsenvironmental.com/boghaunter](http://www.wingsenvironmental.com/boghaunter).

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# Calendar of Insect Events

## Northeast Regional DSA Meeting

**June 9-12 / State College, PA**

Vermont was proud to host last year's regional gathering of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas. A day's drive south of here offers New Englanders a new look on dragonfly diversity. The meeting includes a visit to Ten Acre Pond, of one of the richest odonate habitats in North America. Eighty-five species are known from this single locality. Among the more than 50 species to expect in the second week of June are *Aeshna mutata* (Spatterdock Darner) and *Anax longipes* (Comet Darner). For details consult <[www.udel.edu/chem/white/TAP.html](http://www.udel.edu/chem/white/TAP.html)>.

## Insect Walk at Wake Robin

**Saturday, June 18 / 1-3 pm / Shelburne**

Join the Vermont Entomological Society for a walk at the new residence of noted entomologists Ross and Joyce Bell.

## VES Annual Picnic

**Saturday, June 25 / 10 am - 4 pm / Mt. Philo State Park, Charlotte, VT**

Bring a dish to share and visit with entomologists at the annual picnic of the Vermont Entomological Society. After we eat, we'll set out to investigate the park for insects.

## Firefly Fireworks

**July 1 / 8-10 pm / North Branch Nature Center - Montpelier**

Here's your chance to explore the flashing lives of fireflies. That twinkling in the night is the firefly version of a single bar. So we'll look in on the action as VES President Bryan Pfeiffer leads us on the North Branch Nature Center's first-ever firefly walk. Vermont has about 20 different firefly species, and most have their own distinctive flashy patterns. So come learn about the lives of lightning bugs. And don't forget your jar and flashlight. You must pre-register with NBNC at (802) 229-6206.

## Dragonfly Society of the Americas Annual Meeting

**July 8-12 / Arnprior, Ontario, Canada**

Rub elbows and swing nets with dragonflyers from across the country. It's not often that the DSA's annual meeting is so close to Vermont. The drive to Arnprior is about 5 or 6 hours from Montpelier. At least a few Vermonters will attend. For details contact Paul Catling at [catlingp@agr.gc.ca](mailto:catlingp@agr.gc.ca) or check out <[www.afn.org/~iori/oinevent.html](http://www.afn.org/~iori/oinevent.html)>.

## Annual Butterfly Walk at the Birds of Vermont Museum

**Saturday, July 9 / 10 am - 1 pm / Huntington**

This is the annual VES butterfly walk at the Birds of Vermont Museum, which is itself an amazing Vermont institution.

## Mystery Odonate trip to Southern Vermont

**July 23 / Southern Vermont / 8 am**

Join Lynn Harper, Dave Small and Vermont's Mike Blust for a search for new county records, new state records, or any odes at



Bryan Pfeiffer

*Ischnura hastata* (Citrine Forktail)

all, for that matter, in southern Vermont. Bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet 8 am at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, MA. Or contact Lynn at (978) 249-9436 or [HarperLynn@msn.com](mailto:HarperLynn@msn.com) for an alternate meeting location near our first stop.

## BugFest

**Sunday, July 31 / North Branch Nature Center / Montpelier**

Invertebrates are the stars of the day at our annual Bug Fest. With bug walks, river explorations, insect displays, butterfly garden tours and kids' activities there is something for bug lovers of every age. Bryan Pfeiffer will lead a couple odonate walks. For more details call the nature center at 802-229-6206.

**For a listing of other Massachusetts outings, consult:**

<http://www.odenews.org/Walks.htm>

### A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

I apologize for the sparse contents in this issue of **THE BOGHAUNTER**. With the exception of a few reliable and regular contributors, this newsletter is entirely my responsibility. Even though it rained most of the month of May, birding and other outdoor pursuits left me with little time to assemble an issue with more articles. **Remember, your submissions are certainly welcome.** Stay tuned for better issues to come.

*Bryan M. Pfeiffer*

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*Pachydiplax longipennis* (Blue Dasher) - "obelisking"



Bryan Pfeiffer