



Minnesota Dragonfly Society

Newsletter Issue #3
March 2015

*Ensuring conservation of
Minnesota's dragonflies and
damselflies through
research and education.*

Bobbing for Dragonflies

By Kurt Mead, MDS President

I love it when people get recognition for the work that they do, often quietly and with no expectation of public accolades or even acknowledgement. With that in mind, I was extremely happy to present an honorary lifetime membership to Bob DuBois, on behalf of the MDS Board at our first annual Member Meeting at Warner Nature Center in January. Bob's selfless dedication to all things Odonata in the region needed recognizing, so we did.



I first met Bob at the 2nd Annual Great Lakes Odonata Meeting in Michigan in 2002. Among other things, we bonded over the fact that we both just about expired due to heat exhaustion. Cool heads and a cooler trout stream saved us, that day.

Since then I have had the great honor of being his student and his friend, as many of us have been, and hope to continue to be, in the future. He has been a great champion of our efforts in Minnesota, despite his living east of our borders, in Wisconsin. A great number of new and important dragonfly and damselfly finds in Minnesota have involved Bob in one way, shape, or form. Sometimes it was his net that was involved. Other times it was Minnesotans picking his mind and running specimens, questions, or photos past him. In every instance, he selflessly gave his time and his knowledge to an effort in a state where he neither works nor lives.

Let us collectively raise a gluten-free beer in a toast to our friend and mentor, Bob DuBois!

Bob DuBois (left) accepts an engraved plaque and an honorary lifetime membership to the Minnesota Dragonfly Society from MDS President Kurt Mead. Photo by Arne Myrabo.

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Board Members:

President: Kurt Mead
Vice President: Curt Oien
Treasurer: John Arthur
Secretary: Ami Thompson
Jeff Fischer
Angela Isackson
Rachel MaKarrall
Vanessa Strong

Newsletter Editor:

Rachel MaKarrall

Membership:

The Minnesota Dragonfly Society welcomes everyone! Annual Memberships are \$25 for individuals and \$30 for families.
Contact: info@mndragonfly.org

Who We Are:

The Minnesota Dragonfly Society is a 501(c)(3) organization that facilitates Odonata (dragonfly and damselfly) research, surveys, and education.

Public events include survey outings, identification and citizen science trainings, family education events, and board meetings.

Other events include professional development workshops for educators and research outings for trained members.

Currently the best way to reach us is to request to join our Minnesota Dragonfly Society Facebook Page or through our website: www.mndragonfly.org.



photo by Rachel MaKarrall

Welcome and Thanks to Our New Members!

Individuals and Families

Alon Coppens
Pamela Deerwood
Kristina Delaundreau
Edward Fielor
Mike and Amber Garcia
James Gay
Mitch Haag
Cathy and Brad Heyne
Angela Isackson
Jeanne LaBore
Robin LaFortune
Jim and Sharon Lind
Mary Lysne
Kurt and Betsey Mead
Arne Myrabo
Dianne and Nick Rowse
Paul Smithson
David Spohn
Marti Starr and Dave Bucholz
Michael Sweet
Mark Wheeler
Brian Ziegler

A special thank you to Mark Wheeler for a donation to MDS in memory of his niece, Cheri.

Join us for the
Tenth Annual

Minnesota Dragonfly Gathering!

August 7 - 9, 2015
Tettegouche State Park



photo by Kurt Mead

Every summer the Minnesota Dragonfly Society holds a weekend-long dragonfly and damselfly immersion, and this year it will be held at Tettegouche State Park! Come for a day or camp with the group at the Tettegouche State Park Group Camp for the whole weekend. Beginners are very welcome at this event!

Different regions of the park will be surveyed each day in an attempt to create a list of the dragonflies and damselflies of the park. Northeastern Minnesota is home to many boreal dragonfly species that are not found elsewhere in the state.

In addition to the extensive field surveys throughout the park, throughout the weekend the MDS will be offering a variety of drop-in events at the Tettegouche State Park Visitor's Center for children, families, and adults.

Although the group camp will be shared with other dragonfly-minded folks, you'll be on your own for meals.

There will be some loaner field collection equipment available for beginners and travelers.

Pre-registration is required for camping at the Group Campground. To register, email your name and contact info to Park Naturalist, Kurt Mead at kurt.mead@state.mn.us.

If you prefer a regular campsite (for an RV, camper, etc) it might be a challenge, as all of the reservable sites are already full for the weekend. The park has some first-come, first-served sites that may be open. Also, nearby Eckbeck and Finland State Forest campgrounds may have campsites open, but the North Shore is a busy place in the summer and campsites may be hard to find.

There are several hotels in the area and a list can be provided by contacting the park. Plan ahead.

Hope to see you there!

Top Ten Insights from Minnesota Dragonfly Society's First Annual Membership Meeting

By Angela Isackson, MDS Board Member

1. Warm weather and eager MDS board members and volunteers welcomed over forty guests to Warner Nature Center on Saturday, January 3rd.

2. Gracious donors brought in over \$800 of items for the silent auction and successfully raised \$610 for the non-profit. Items ranged from field books to helicopter trips into far away bogs!

3. Membership to MDS more than doubled! As we welcome eighteen new members and families (see page 2), the good word continues to spread.

4. Lucky winners of the door prizes walked away with new MDS bling (hat), unique dragonfly sticker, sampling kit, and a new net waiting to be broken in this summer.

5. Bob Dubois was presented with the first Honorary MDS Lifetime Membership commemorating his contributions to what we know about Minnesota dragonflies and damselflies (see page 1).

6. Live nymphs anxiously waited for new students to take a peek under the microscopes to learn identification tips from the pros.



7. Many guests were fortunate enough to get a glimpse of the rare and elusive blue morph *Edisonii* adorable. shown at left. (Photo by Arne Myrabo.)

8. Guests enjoyed a wide variety of talks on bog trekking for rare emeralds (Curt Oien, below. Photo by Arne Myrabo), Odonata in the classroom, photography tricks, current research developments, and the history and future of MDS. Poetry readings inspired by odonates also added something for everyone!



9. All guests left with not only a vintage souvenir MDS button but also a lasting bond with their new fellow odonate enthusiast!

10. Last but not least, Minnesota Dragonfly Society members and directors continue to prepare for a fun-filled and successful 2015 field season!

Special thanks to all those who took time to assist with planning and preparing for this event, especially Ron Lawrenz and the wonderful and amazing volunteers from Warner Nature Center. Appreciation is also given to all those presenting and the sharing of poetry by Scott King and Ken Tennesen.

Dragonflies Galore!

By Amie Durenberger,

Seasonal Naturalist at Fort Snelling State Park

(reprinted with permission from the newsletter of the Minnesota Naturalists' Association)

On June 9th, my coworker and I hopped into our naturalist van and took a road trip to Warner Nature Center. We were headed to a Dragonfly Workshop set up by the Minnesota Naturalists' Association, and we weren't quite sure what was in store for us. Neither of us knew much about dragonflies besides a few simple facts about life cycles and memories of colorful patterned wings. The meeting started off on the right foot; not only did they supply us with plenty of delicious breakfast treats (and Peace Coffee!) but the information during the first presentation really struck my curiosity. We learned detailed facts on anatomy, habitat, diet, and reproduction.

Yet, the most exciting part didn't happen until we stepped outside. Splitting into groups, we each grabbed a net and went out into the woods. Our guide taught us about the proper way to handle a dragonfly to assure its wings wouldn't be crushed nor its legs removed. How amazed I was! I had been convinced that dragonflies were the same as butterflies, too fragile and easily ruined by my fingerprints. Within moments, I learned just how strong and resilient dragonflies actually are. Walking down to the water, it was like Hitchcock's *The Birds*, except with less terror and more dragonflies! It was mating season and swarms circled above the water. We easily caught one, then five, then probably about ten dragonflies by the end of our time. We spent a while handling them, identifying the species, and checking them for eggs or mites.

Unfortunately, we had to leave the workshop early to get back to our park, Fort Snelling State Park, in time for a meeting that day. But we spent the whole car ride home chirping about our exciting new dragonfly fascination. From there, nearly every day I would grab a net and search the park for new species. When our park flooded later that

month, I felt disheartened, thinking that surely that would wipe out all of the dragonfly larvae that I wanted so desperately to hatch. However, to my delight, the exact opposite happened! After the flood I found several pockets in the park that had become the perfect dragonfly habitats.

For the most part I caught plenty of meadowhawks and a few small skimmers. We would even bring our nets to our fishing programs, just in case we would have an opportunity to catch an elusive darter. But in the end, we didn't even need the net. After weeks of swinging and swooping and, well, missing, it finally happened. Our I Can Fish program was just about to start when out of nowhere, the largest dragonfly I had ever seen came and landed right on my shorts. I called to my supervisor, Krista, in excitement.

"Krista! Krista! Grab the net! Quick! It's a... It's a.... I don't know, one of those really big green ones!" I shouted.

As I looked down, it was sitting so still that I simply cupped my hands and folded them over the dragonfly. It was so simple and effortless, and that was how I caught a huge Common Green Darner. Hurrah! After that, I really became obsessed.

I began leading interpretive programming on dragonflies throughout the park. Adults and children alike were amazed with how easy it was to handle the insects and examine them up close. Many of them attempted to control the food chain and feed damselflies to the dragonflies (but it never actually took). The visitors loved catching dragonflies for the same reason I did; it harmlessly brought fast moving, beautiful nature to a standstill and created a unique connection. Besides one very unfortunate decapitation of a striking Blue Dasher (by the hands of a very curious and quick 1-year-old) these programs were a complete success. So thank you, thank you, thank you to all of the presenters and the Minnesota Naturalists' Association for hosting such a stimulating and useful workshop. Who knows what we might catch next year!

Upcoming MDS Events

Spring is almost here, and the summer calendar is already filling up with fantastic dragonfly events! Come and join us!

March 19, 5:30 p.m. Dragonflies and Drinks.

Bent Brewstillery, Roseville, free. Join the local dragonfly and nature enthusiasts over some local brews, as we talk about our past adventures and plan some new ones. Contact Jacki Morrison, mndragonflies@gmail.com.

May 3, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Minnesota Dragonfly Society Board Meeting. Lee and Rose Warner Nature Center, Marine-on-St-Croix, free. All are welcome to help us plan the future of MDS! Contact info@mndragonfly.org for more information.

May 23, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The Great Dragonfly Gathering 2015. Tamarack Nature Center, White Bear Township, free. Come be a part of our Annual Hoopla! Attendees get up-close, hands-on experience catching and handling dragonflies from a local expert, while learning about their fascinating biology, and the important connection dragonflies have to clean water and our local lakes, streams, and wetlands. Equipment and light refreshments provided. We will spend most of the day outside, so please dress for the weather. Led by Vanessa Strong, vanessa.strong@vlawmo.org. Please register online at www.vlawmo.org.



photo by Kurt Mead

May 31, 2:00 p.m. A Dazzle of Dragonflies.

Historic Hay Lake School, Marine on St. Croix, free. Public presentation followed by dragonfly chasing at 3:00. Equipment provided, but bring insect nets if you have them. Led by Ron Lawrenz.

June 6, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The Annual Warner Nature Center Dragonfly BioBlitz.

Lee and Rose Warner Nature Center, Marine on St. Croix, free. Dragonfly program followed by field walks. Equipment provided, but bring insect nets if you have them. For more information visit www.warnernaturecenter.org.

June 20, 1:00 p.m. Dragonfly Outing.

Springbrook Nature Center, Fridley, free. We will begin with a short dragonfly 101 introduction, followed by a walk through the center's trails and finishing up with a return to the center to download cameras and look at details of what we observed. Beginners are encouraged, and bring your digital camera! Led by John Arthur.



photo by Curt Oien

June 26-28, Red Lake Wildlife Management Area Odonata Survey.

Historic Norris Camp, near Roosevelt, free. Join the survey crew and experience two full field days odonating in this fantastic place! Dragonfly presentations and potluck dinner on Saturday night. Supplies provided for cleaning everyone's gear to prevent the spread of invasive species. Led by Curt Oien and Mitch Haag. Lodging and camping available. Contact Curt.Oien@mndragonfly.org for more information and to RSVP.

Upcoming MDS Events

(continued from previous page)

June 27, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Dragonfly Survey and Drop-In Discovery. Tamarack Nature Center, White Bear Township, free. A super-concentrated bioblitz extravaganza of fun! Led by Vanessa Strong, vanessa.strong@vlawmo.org.



photo by Kurt Mead

July 1, morning and afternoon session, times TBD. Dragonfly Camps for Kids. Tamarack Nature Center, White Bear Township, cost depends on program. Two programs available: Backyard Bugs (1st/2nd grade), and Naturally Scientific (3rd/4th grade). Must register with Tamarack Nature Center at <https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/tamarack/Pages/day-camps.aspx>. Led by Vanessa Strong, vanessa.strong@vlawmo.org.

July 10 -11, 12:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m. Simon Lake BioBlitz. Sheepberry Fen preserve, Pope County, free. MDS volunteers will be surveying dragonflies as part of a larger BioBlitz. Contact Robin Moore, rmoore@landstewardshipproject.org.

July 29, times TBD. Hug a Bug Dragonfly Camp for Kids. Tamarack Nature Center, White Bear Township, cost depends on program. Two sessions available: morning (PreK/K), and afternoon (PreK/K/1st/2nd grade). Must register with Tamarack Nature Center at <https://parks.co.ramsey.mn.us/tamarack/Pages/day-camps.aspx>. Led by Vanessa Strong, vanessa.strong@vlawmo.org.

July 25, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Dragonfly Survey and Drop-In Discovery. Tamarack Nature Center, White Bear Township, free. A super-concentrated bioblitz extravaganza of fun! Led by Vanessa Strong, vanessa.strong@vlawmo.org.

August 7 - 9, Annual Minnesota Dragonfly Gathering, Tettegouche State Park, Silver Bay, free. Starting at 9:00 a.m. on 8/7, with various events throughout the weekend. See page 3 of this newsletter for more details.

September 19 - 20, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Advanced Odonata Nymph Identification Workshop. Eastman Nature Center, Osseo, \$20. Learn nymph identification, aquatic habitats, rearing techniques and preservation methods. Primary instructor is Robert DuBois, Wisconsin DNR Endangered Resources Bureau Aquatic Ecologist and author of Damselflies of the North Woods. Specimens, references, lab tools provided. Three Rivers Park District will supply microscopes, but feel free to bring your own. The nymph collection part of the workshop will be conducted in the creeks, lakes and wetlands of Elm Creek Park Reserve and led by Curt Oien, Mitch Haag, and Ron Lawrenz. Dress accordingly. Hip boots or waders are recommended, or plan on getting wet. Bring whatever nymph collection equipment you have. MDS will secure the required permits and will also supply equipment for cleaning boots and collection equipment to prevent the spread of invasive species. Pre-registration required. Contact Curt.Oien@mndragonfly.org.



photo by Ami Thompson

First Flight

The dragonfly has never flown before;
the whole of its life has passed
below the surface
of the pond.
Sunken treasure.
The wooden chest
tips open.
Out of the gap
stretches the dragonfly.
The sunlight and the blue sky
provide the graph paper
upon which the wings are drawn.
The ink dries. Then the wings move.
The dragonfly tries the air for the first time
and is lifted. The muscles
that grip the wing base
are like the muscles of the
four-chambered heart
that propel us through life.

Who among us can't recognize
that flutter of reluctance and desire
that vibration between stay and go
at the moment of first flight,
or the way a word, used for the first time,
seems perfect, yet surprises us,
because it's already filled, partway,
with function and meaning,
with shape and sound,
because it's not the word's first use
nor the first time a dragonfly has flown.

Scott King

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Dragonflies in the Classroom

Fourth graders from Plainview-Elgin-Milville learn about dragonfly life cycles, identification, and dragonflies as water quality indicators from Sara Holger, Interpretive Naturalist at Whitewater State Park. Sara visited about 125 students in January as part of 4th Grade STEM Day at the school, and helped students make clothespin dragonflies to take home. Students came up with creative names for their dragonflies, including "Short-winged Viking Face," and "Mesothelioma." Students also got some brand new Minnesota Dragonfly Society tattoos! (Photos by Sara Holger.)



Do you have a great dragonfly photo or an awesome story from the field?

We'd be happy to include it in the next MDS newsletter! The deadline to submit content for the June newsletter is May 15. Please email original articles, photos, artwork, news and events to Rachel.MaKarrall@mndragonfly.org.