

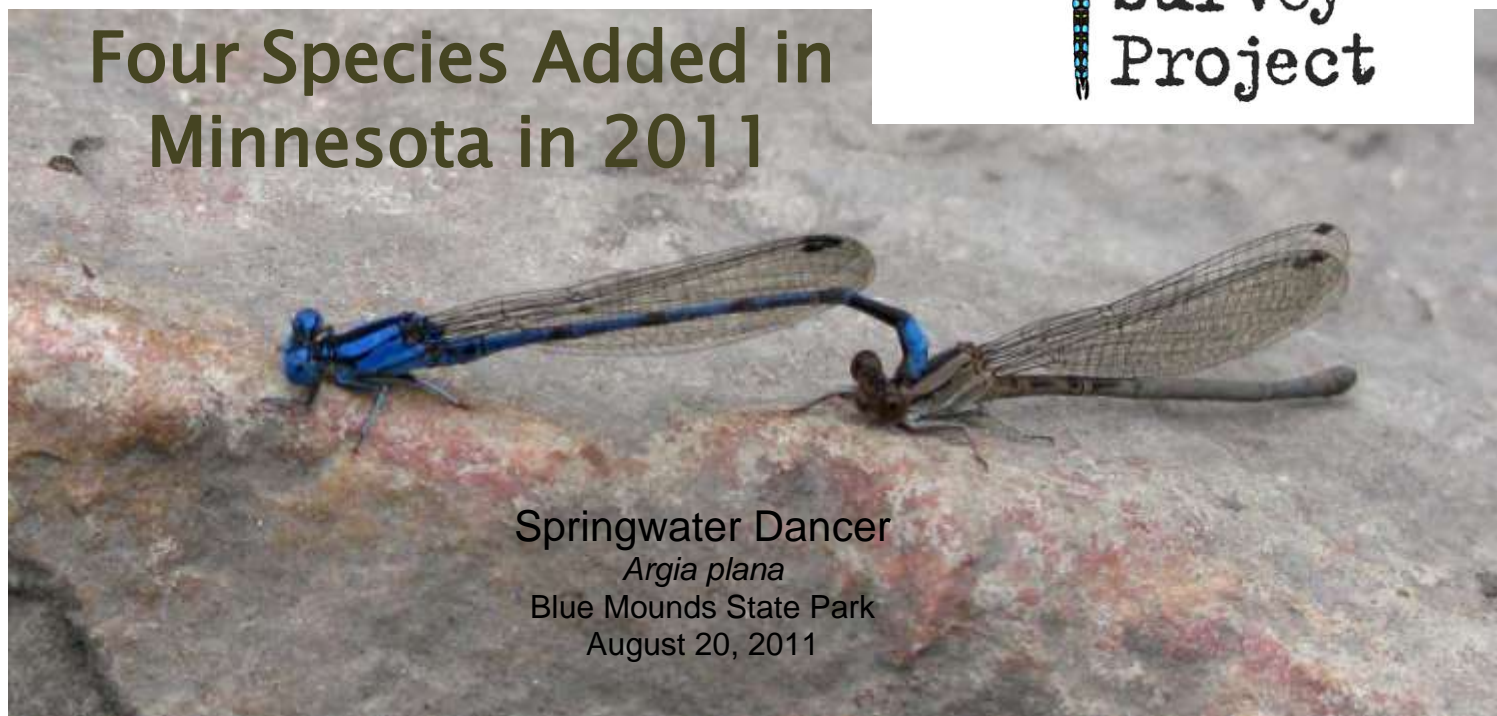
MINNESOTA ODONATA GAZETTE

Winter 2012
Volume 5, Issue 1

Minnesota Odonata Survey Project, 6388 Lax Lake Rd, Finland MN 55603
www.mndragonfly.org info@mndragonfly.org 218 353.7443
Kurt Mead Coordinator
All photos and articles by Kurt Mead unless otherwise noted.



Four Species Added in Minnesota in 2011



Springwater Dancer
Argia plana
Blue Mounds State Park
August 20, 2011

Greetings Earthlings!

The year, 2011, was a banner year for the MOSP. Our volunteers numbers are good (but never good enough!) and they are doing some great work, expanding ranges, finding lots of new county records, and even finding new state records. Our week-long targeted surveys are amassing huge amounts of data.

One of the highlights of 2011 was the discovery of four species in Minnesota that had never been reported from our state. I have included some background on these finds in this newsletter.

One very exciting outlook for 2012 is the possibility of finding even more new species in MN. We live in state that is at the margins of the ranges of lots of critters and, though

perhaps not numerous, I feel that we will find even more isolated populations of these edge species.

The 2012 survey workshop schedule has been finalized and can be seen on page 3 as well as on the MOSP website. The website Calendar also has some other dragonfly programs and opportunities listed. There is some good stuff going on out there.

Kurt Mead - MOSP Coordinator

Odonata Teacher Workshops

By Ami Thompson



Ami proudly displays her first county record at the 2011 MOSP survey workshop in Albert Lea, MN.

“I need the energy of a middle schooler.”

That’s the thought that passed through my mind while I was swinging and missing at odes during the Albert Lea MOSP workshop last summer, and it started the gears cranking.

At that June workshop I spoke with Kurt about creating a project working in parallel with the MOSP that would teach teachers how to bring the experience of catching and examining dragon and damselflies into the classroom. He was excited and on-board with the concept but I don’t think he knew how far I’d run with it.

A bit of history, since 1998 I’ve been an environmental educator working for the Wisconsin DNR, the Minnesota DNR, and the National Park Service. In 2008, I started my own environmental education consulting business, landing on teacher workshops as my specialty in 2010.

The potential of Odonata teacher workshops hit me immediately: a great way to encourage teachers to bring students outside, a connection to physical fitness and outdoor recreation, a very solid citizen science connection, and most importantly a lot of fun.

So, since June, I’ve been drafting an Odonata curriculum guide and setting up Odonata teacher workshops around the state. The curriculum guide will contain activities that tie outdoor experiences into the classroom. And the workshops will feature Odonata life history, IDing techniques, a lot of odeing time, take-home classroom activities, and technology connections.

My goal is to do thirty Odonata teacher workshops this summer with at least ten educators at each workshop. The participants could be teachers, naturalists, scout leaders, homeschooling parents, anyone who wants to learn how to teach with Odonata.

I could use your help marketing to potential participants and finding host sites at schools, nature centers, or other place anywhere in Minnesota or western Wisconsin. Please share this opportunity with any educators or organizations you think may be interested!

The workshop expenses are unfortunately not covered by outside funding, so I need to charge for attendance. The fee is \$65 per participant. The workshops are four hours long and educators will earn four CEUs for attending. Workshop attendees will have access to check out an odeing kit after the workshop with nets, ID guides, hand lenses, and other items.

Currently, I have workshops scheduled at Fort Snelling State Park, Itasca State Park, Como Park (St. Paul), Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center (Duluth), and the Bush Lake Izaak Walton League Lodge (Bloomington), the International Wolf Center (Ely), and a few more. Dates, times, and more information available on my website: www.amithompson.com

If you have any marketing ideas or suggestions of people to contact please email me at ami@amithompson.com. All help is greatly appreciated!

2012 Dragonfly Workshops and Events in Minnesota

An **MOSP Survey Workshop** is a free, hands-on way to get introduced to the identification of dragonflies and damselflies. Beginners will get solid instruction in the field with live bugs in real-time. Even if you have attended a workshop in the past or are fairly sure of your ID skills I invite you attend a workshop this summer. Meet new folks and share your skills with others. We always have a great time!

Details about these workshops are available on the “Calendar of Events” page on the MOSP website.

June 16, 2012 Within the **Vadnais Heights Watershed District in Ramsey County**, meeting site TBA

June 24, 2012 **Winona, MN** meeting site TBA

July 8, 2012 **Big Bog State Recreation Area** Waskish, MN on Upper Red Lake

July 28, 2012 **Sibley State Park** New London, MN

June 8 - 10, 2012 **7th Annual Minnesota Dragonfly Gathering, U of M Itasca Field Station, Itasca State Park.**

The 2012 MDG will be headquartered and housed at the U of M’s Itasca Field Station in Itasca State Park. A highlight of the weekend will be a canoe trip down the Shell River in northern Wadena County. (Bring your canoe, borrow one from your neighbor, or rent one from a vendor in the area – I’m working on the rental details...) The beautiful Shell River holds great promise for a variety of uncommon Clubtail species. Other field trips will occur in and around Itasca State Park.

Details and costs will be announced on the MOSP website when they are available.



MOSP Calendar of Events

can be found at:

<http://www.mndragonfly.org/calendar.html>

Other Dragonfly Field Opportunities

Odonata Teacher Workshops led by Ami Thompson – see article on page 2.

As we enter spring, there will be several, non-MOSP dragonfly programs listed on the MOSP website. If you want us to list your event, email Kurt at:

info@mndragonfly.org

The Four New Species Added to MN List in 2011



#1 Sioux Snaketail

The Sioux Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus smithi*) was first discovered in 1994 in western Wisconsin (described by Tennessen in 2004) and subsequently found in northeastern Iowa.

During the 2011 GLOM/MDG at Whitewater State Park, June 9-12, several different field groups found Sioux Snaketails, adults and exuviae, in various branches/forks of the Zumbro River in Dodge, Goodhue and Olmsted Counties.

#2 Southern Spreadwing

The Southern Spreadwing (*Lestes australis*) is closely related to the Northern Spreadwing (*Lestes disjunctus*) with the distinction between the two becoming more clear in just the past decade or two. The distribution shown on Odonata Central does not, in my opinion, give a clear representation of the actual range in North America, probably due to the uncertainty in IDing these two species.

During the 2011 GLOM/MDG at Whitewater State Park, June 9-12, different field groups found Southern Spreadwings in Dodge and Wabasha Counties. In addition, this species was found in Mower County during the June targeted survey.

#3 Springwater Dancer

New Species – Continued



The Springwater Dancer (*Argia plana*) is a species of the lower Midwest, almost exclusively found west of the Mississippi River, ranging down through Arizona, Texas and into Mexico. According to Odonata Central (www.odonatacentral.org) there are several records from Southern Wisconsin, representing the farthest east records. OC also reports two records from the Black Hills of South Dakota which represent the farthest north records.

On August 20, 2011, during the final MOSP Survey Workshop located at Blue Mounds State Park, we discovered a robust population of Springwater Dancers (*Argia plana*), many of them in copula (mating). This is the first report of this species in Minnesota.

The Minnesota *Argia plana* site is located in Blue Mounds State Park in Rock County, on Mound Creek, at the downstream end of the natural pool between the two impoundments (43.717033N, 96.188361W). This section of Mound Creek fits the general description of Springwater Dancer waters, being a smaller, rocky creek with gentle flow and vegetation. The closest previous site for this species is Sioux County, Iowa, two counties south of Rock County in MN.

#4 Great Spreadwing

New Species – Continued

By Scott King

Last year when Dan Tallman emailed a photo he'd taken of a damselfly in his yard in Northfield on August 22, I was stunned to see that it was a Great Spreadwing (*Archilestes grandis*), a new state record [OC# 322492]. I made several attempts to find it at nearby ponds over the next weeks without any luck. Given it was so far north of its known range, I was inclined to believe it was a vagrant.

This year, on September 8, while kicking along the edge of Cannon River, I came upon a Great Spreadwing perched about four feet off the ground in the weeds on the river bank, opening and closing the angle of its wings while I looked at it. When I tried to net it, it flew away. This was my first look at this spectacular damselfly and I'd probably still be stomping around in a funk if it hadn't showed up a few minutes later [OC# 332893]

About a month later, on October 3, while exploring the wooded flood plain along the Mississippi River in Goodhue County, I encountered yet another Great Spreadwing. The male perched on the branch of a sapling maple a few feet my head. I had a good look at it but didn't have a chance to photograph or net it.

Finding this big damselfly two years in a row is exciting, and would seem to indicate a breeding population, or more, in the state. Ken Tennesen suggests (pers. com.) that the Great Spreadwing's preferred habitat may be the river, especially any slow or impounded stretches. I promise to give it a good look next year, maybe even search for those great nymphs that swim as fast as tadpoles or minnows.





Minnesota Odonata Survey Project

Support for this project was received from the USFWS State Wildlife Grants Program, the Minnesota Game and Fish Heritage Enhancement Fund, and the Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Fund through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological Resources.

MOSP logo designed (and donated) by Rick Kollath of Kollath Graphic Design in Duluth

Minnesota Odonata Survey Project
% Kurt Mead
6388 Lax Lake Rd
Finland MN 55603



The old saying, “Many hands make light work” applies directly to our situation. Our hope is that there will be many hands, in Minnesota, all adding a little bit to our knowledge of the Odonata of Minnesota. The result, hopefully, will be a better understanding of these charismatic insects in Minnesota.

