



# ARGIA

The News Journal of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas

Vol. 32 No. 4

December 2020





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Odonata Online in 2021

By Bryan Pfeiffer

Barring an early defeat of the coronavirus pandemic, the DSA intends to gather online in 2021 to do what we would otherwise do in person: share knowledge and experiences among damselflies and dragonflies. We're planning a series of online presentations, workshops, meetings and an Odonata BioBlitz (an OdoBlitz).

The DSA Executive Council has decided, yet again, to postpone our annual gathering in Oklahoma. Although I would much rather visit Oklahoma and see you there in person — to swing nets, sling cameras, and slog in wetlands together — this move online could very well be a boost for the DSA.

The OdoBlitz, for example, would be open to anyone who cares to find a dragonfly and post the sighting online. DSA members would be there to vet the online records and advise novices on what they've discovered. A series of workshops and research presentations, available via Zoom video conferencing, would allow us to reach more people farther afield. Having taught a successful online butterfly seminar this year, I'm convinced these events will be a boon to DSA and to Odonata.

But here's the catch: This won't happen without your help. And I'll be honest: My earlier pleas in this column for more membership involvement in the operations of the DSA have, in large part, gone unanswered. So please answer the call. The EC cannot organize these online events alone. We need you.

We need you to present online lectures for varied audiences and on virtually any topic relating to Odonata — from photography to *Phanogomphus*, from net technique to nymphs to *Neurocordulia*. If you've got the skills and inclination to run a short online workshop or present on your research, please reach out to me ([president@dragonflysocietyamericas.org](mailto:president@dragonflysocietyamericas.org)). Or even if you don't have ode topics to share, but you have strong organizational skills, please step forward to help with this event.

The EC will be refining our ideas for all of this in coming months, and we'll be sharing them with you — on our website and through social media — even before the next issue of *ARGIA*.

Although it knows nothing of Odonata or human nature, the coronavirus has been as treacherous as any demagogue or dictator at exploiting our varied human vulnerabilities. Not only does it kill or infirm us, or even harm us not at all, the virus attacks the core of what it means to be human: to gather together, to share experiences, knowledge, and ideas. For many of us, the pandemic has delivered pain or great loss. And although the DSA's plans for 2021 cannot necessarily conquer pain and loss, let us at least gather online — the one place this virus can never keep us apart.

*Bryan Pfeiffer, the DSA president until 2021, is a consulting naturalist and a retired educator who lives in Montpelier, Vermont. Contact him at [president@dragonflysocietyamericas.org](mailto:president@dragonflysocietyamericas.org) or find him online at [www.bryanpfeiffer.com](http://www.bryanpfeiffer.com).*

HELP WANTED

The DSA needs you. In order to grow as an organization, and to improve our services to members, we're looking for two (or more) volunteers:

**Social Media Coordinator**

This is a new and essential function for DSA. We're looking to elevate our social media game, in part to increase our membership and mostly to better communicate with the public. You would coordinate with DSA Executive Council members to generate a steady stream of content. This position requires between 5 and 10 hours per month, or more if you or others have the time.

**Membership Coordinator**

Our membership database is online and easy to administer. As many of you know, membership renewals are automated, but every so often we need an actual human being to keep track of things and communicate with folks. It probably amounts to no more than five hours per month.

If you're interested in either of these positions, or offering your skills to the DSA in other ways, please contact our president, Bryan Pfeiffer, at [president@dragonflysocietyamericas.org](mailto:president@dragonflysocietyamericas.org). Thanks!

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Sanctuary in Odonata

By Amanda Whispell

As both 2020 and my first year as editor-in-chief of *ARGIA* come to an end, I find myself reflecting back quite a lot. I am sure this year will always be the year of the pandemic, but there were many other important happenings too: The Black Lives Matter movement and protests, the United States election that would not end (and the never-ending campaigning and solicitation), the bushfires in Australia and forest fires on the west coast, the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the first female vice president of the United States, and so many more. Nevertheless, for most people around the world, the biggest impact has been that of the pandemic. It has affected almost everything and everyone. I am certain that many of you, like myself, escaped the challenges of home confinement by spending even more time outside than usual this summer. I did not visit any of the usual places though, as I did not go to field sites for research, but I did find some new spots to visit and I did see a huge number of odes.

There are two oding memories that stand out above the rest. The first was the incredible biodiversity that we witnessed at one of our (new) favorite kayaking sites here in Pennsylvania. At any given moment, while out on the lake, you could look in almost any direction and easily see several hundred dragons and damselfly. Some perched, some did kayak-flybys, some went along with their business of copulating and ovipositing; they were absolutely everywhere and it was absolutely amazing. We went back to this lake more times than we went anywhere else this summer (the proximity to an amazing ice cream shop was just the sprinkles on the ice cream), because I was just as enchanted with each subsequent visit as I had been with the first.

The second memory that stands out for me occurred in a salt marsh in southern Maine, where I captured and photographed my first Seaside Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax berenice*; Fig. 1). Not particularly rare or hard to catch, they are charismatic little odes and unique here in the United States because they breed in seawater. It was so intriguing to watch the tandem pairs flying over the floating mats of seaweed and dropping down to lay their eggs. So unusual was this sight that we sat by the marsh for as long as we could stand it before the Marsh Flies drove us away.

2020 was a year in which we all took stock of what was important to us. I barely saw most of my loved ones, but they were on my mind even more than usual. Even as I write this, I am still feeling disappointed about missing Christmas at

home in Maine with my parents for the first time in my life. I know staying here in Pennsylvania is how I keep them—and us—safe, so I’m trying to focus on the benefits of a FaceTime Christmas. I don’t know what 2021 has in store for me but I am hopeful that we will all be able to rediscover some form of normal. For right now, I’m grateful that I am able to help connect us together through *ARGIA*. I encourage you to share your own personal experiences and to submit articles and photographs that tell us how odes helped you get through this year. Your happy ode stories might be just the thing someone else needs to find a bit of cheer.

*Amanda Whispell, the editor-in-chief of ARGIA, is busy writing manuscripts related to her work on color change in Argia apicalis (Blue-fronted Dancer). She can be reached at editor@dragonflysocietymerica.org or on Twitter at @AmandaWhispell. For more information about Amanda’s research visit www.amandawhispell.com.*



**Figure 1.** Seaside Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax berenice*); 26 August 2020; Wells, Maine; photograph by Amanda Whispell.

*ARGIA*  
and  
*Bulletin of American*  
*Odonatology*

**Call for Submissions**

The DSA welcomes proposals for articles on most any topic related to Odonata for our quarterly news journal, *ARGIA*, or our occasional peer-reviewed journal, *Bulletin of American Odonatology* (BAO). Topics should be generally consistent with the DSA mission.

Inquires about *ARGIA* proposals should be directed to its editor, Amanda Whispell, at [editor@dragonflysocietyamericas.org](mailto:editor@dragonflysocietyamericas.org).

For BAO proposals, contact its editor, Steve Hummel, at [editorbao@dragonflysocietyamericas.org](mailto:editorbao@dragonflysocietyamericas.org).

Authors preparing articles should consult our [Submissions Guidelines](#) and include a completed [Submission Form](#) when submitting your articles; both are available on the DSA website: [www.dragonflysocietyamericas.org/instructions-to-authors](http://www.dragonflysocietyamericas.org/instructions-to-authors).

**Back cover:**

Citrine Forktails (*Ischnura hastata*)

7 November 2020

Wilmington, North Carolina

(34.29250,-77.78466)

**Photograph by:**

James Reber



