



LATE-SEASON ODONATA AT LEFURGE WOODS WETLAND

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In early September, I received a forwarded message that had originated from Jack Smiley, President of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, asking about someone to identify Odonata and other elements of the fauna at the LeFurge Woods wetland in Superior Township. I felt this was a great opportunity to survey a recently-created wetland to see what species had established themselves there, and to see how well the project to create a wetland had progressed.

The goal of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SEMCLC) is to turn about 9 acres of the 171 acres of LeFurge Woods into a good wetland system. The site was a former soybean and corn farm, and over 50,000 cubic yards of soil were removed to create the wetlands (which must have created the large hill that you see from the road!).

The LeFurge Woods wetlands is new to me, so I jumped at the opportunity to check out the site. On September 9th, I visited the wetlands for approximately an hour. In general, I'm really impressed with the site. The ponds there are well-vegetated along the margins, providing a lot of interstitial areas for larval habitat, as well as good emergence sites. It was rather windy, but I was able to collect and/or observe the following species:

COENAGRIONIDAE

Enallagma civile - extremely abundant

Enallagma aspersum - one collected, several others seen. This is a new county record for Washtenaw Co.

Ischnura verticalis - common (the most commonly encountered damselfly species in Michigan).

AESHNIDAE

Anax junius - very abundant - aside from the numerous adults, there were hundreds of exuviae on the emergent vegetation.

LIBELLULIDAE

Libellula luctuosa - 2 seen - it's pretty late in the season for them.

Pachydiplax longipennis - 1 collected - again, a mid-summer species.

Sympetrum vicinum - common

Tramea lacerata - common

None of the species listed above are rare, but they do indicate that the ponds are a great place for species to colonize. As long as there are no fish there, there will be wonderful odonate populations. Of special note is the *Enallagma aspersum*, which is only found in fishless ponds, and this site is the first one recorded for Washtenaw Co. that has this species. *Anax junius*, the Common Green Darner, also does far better in fishless ponds, and this was evident by the multitude of larval exuviae found around the margins of the ponds.

Interestingly, *A. junius* apparently has two populations in lower Michigan. One population is resident - larvae overwinter in ponds and the adults emerge in June-July. The other population is migratory. Adults fly North from southern states, reaching Michigan in late March to early May, visiting ponds and lakes and ovipositing in many of them. Their offspring are able to complete their development in just 3 months or less, feasting on tadpoles as they grow larger. The adults emerge in August-September and finally move southward as cold weather approaches. They become sexually mature after they migrate South. We don't really know how far these migrating populations move, but huge numbers have been seen moving southward on the East coast. On the Great Lakes, we see them following the lakeshore southward in the fall. Ponds like those at LeFurge Woods provide ideal habitats for this species. In addition, the adjacent upland fields provide a good area for the adults to feed in.

Further sampling next spring and summer should provide additional species to the list, and I look forward to visiting the site again. For more information about the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, contact Bill Secrest at 734-482-5957.