

## Monitoring Dragonfly Migrations

by Cindy Travis

I've been interested in this project for some time. Very interesting and coincidental that Sheri's article was submitted at the same time for this issue.

The Migratory Dragonfly Partnership is an organization that includes dragonfly experts, academic institutions, and federal agencies of the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, as well as nongovernmental programs. The Partnership's goals are two-fold: to better understand North America's migrating dragonflies, and to promote conservation of the habitat on which they rely. Their initial focus is on establishing a network of Citizen Scientists to track the spring and fall migrations. While none of the known migratory species are endangered, they are of great ecological importance in the food chain of aquatic systems, and their migrations are a poorly understood phenomenon. Best of all they eat mosquitos and biting flies!!

For migration monitoring, participants only need a pond or wetland that can be regularly accessed throughout the year. Documentation of the presence, emergence and behaviors of the five best known migratory dragonflies in North America; Common Green Darner, Variegated Meadowhawk, Black Saddlebag, Wandering Glider and Spot-Winged Glider, is done by visiting the website [www.migratorydragonflypartnership.org](http://www.migratorydragonflypartnership.org) and clicking on "Enter Migratory Data". The project started in 2011 and there are now over 1000 citizen scientists making contributions. That web site will give you all you need to know to get started.

For the "not so squeamish" and scientifically minded, an extra component of monitoring is collection of adult migrants returning north in early spring or south flying migrants from late July to mid-October. Also, the collection of exuviae (cast-off nymphal skin left behind when adults emerge) may be done at any time they are found. These collections provide scientific information stored in the bodies of developing nymphs and preserved in the wing tissues of the adult - no matter how far from its birth site the adult is captured. Info provided will tell the latitude at which a nymph developed! For more information visit the Vermont Center for Ecostudies site: [vtecostudies.org/projects/lakes-ponds/dragonfly-migration/](http://vtecostudies.org/projects/lakes-ponds/dragonfly-migration/) and to participate in this part, contact Sara Zahendra at ([szahendra@vtecostudies.org](mailto:szahendra@vtecostudies.org))

This Citizen Science project has been approved for our chapter to participate in the gaining of information regarding the migratory habits of these specified dragonflies. Hours can be logged under the VMS category "Cit. Sci. - Migratory Dragonfly Project". To assist with ID in the field, an iOS app "Dragonfly ID" is available for download, and an Android version is under development.

The individual photos of the five species are labeled for reuse and are from commons.wikipedia.org.

Some resource data I have collected for use in this project are:

1. Dragonflies of Texas. A guide to Common and Notable Species. James L. Lasswell & Forrest L. Mitchell

(Continued on page 5)



Green Darner female



Black Saddlebags



Spot Winged Glider

Variegated Meadowhawk Male



Wondering Glider



2. Monitoring Dragonfly Migration in North America. Protocols for Citizen Scientists. Migratory Dragonfly Partnership
3. Dragonflies and Damselflies. A Folding Pocket Guide to Familiar, Widespread North American Species. Kavanagh/Leung
4. Introduction to Dragonfly and Damselfly Watching. Texas Parks and Wildlife
5. Dragonflies. Q & A Guide. Ann Cooper
6. Dragonflies and Damselflies (Odonata) of Texas, Volume 5, 2011. John C. Abbott



Green Darner pair by Dennis Paulson, from [awaytogarden.com](http://awaytogarden.com)