

Did You Know that Some Dragonflies Migrate?

By Ray Novotny, Naturalist Emeritus, Mill Creek Metroparks

I attended Ami Thompson's dragonfly session at our 2013 NAI national conference in Reno. She began her career as an interpretive park ranger at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area in St. Paul, Minnesota, so it shouldn't have surprised me that on a cool November day, she dipped for nymphs in the not-exactly-gently-flowing Truckee River near our hotel. Ami updated me at a subsequent conference: she was working on a doctorate at the University of Minnesota, and her research included cutting through ice to study nymphs during winter, and during summer, using helicopters for transportation to remote bogs!

Ami is now a professor at North Carolina Wesleyan University. She also works with Wings Across the Americas, a U.S. Forest Service International Program "Partnering to Preserve & Protect Migratory Species and their Habitat."

On the final Saturday in August 2023, Ami and her colleagues Melissa Sanchez Herrera, a native of Columbia, now a post-doc at the University of Alabama, and freelance biologist Sandra Hunt von Arb of California, traveled to Ohio to present a workshop about the migration mysteries of the Common Green Darner dragonfly. U.S. Forest Service administrators Karin Theophile and

Mike Rizo also accompanied them. I learned about something brand new to me: The Motus Wildlife Tracking System. According to its website, "Motus is an international collaborative research network that uses coordinated automated radio telemetry to facilitate research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals. Motus is a program of Birds Canada in partnership with collaborating

international dragonfly conservation & research and hopefully reveal clues about the mystery of migration.

How fortunate for me that the workshop's site, West Creek Reservation in Cleveland Metroparks, is only ~70 miles from home. About 20 others attended, mostly local teachers. NAI award-winners Tim Krynak and Jennifer Brumfield, former Metroparks interpretive naturalists now working in resource management, also shared their expertise.

Sandra made my day by choosing me to release one of the darners! I hope to find out about its journey south.

For more information:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SL-8LayWFGY&t=9s>
<https://www.amidragonfly.com/>
<https://motus.org/>



Photo of Ray Novotny releasing Darner courtesy of Sandra Hunt-von Arb

researchers and organizations." During the workshop, we captured nine darners, attached Motus tags (a tedious process!), and then released them. A network of Motus stations will record location data as they fly past. Data will inform future



Amy and Melissa attaching tags Sandra records data