



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Elliott Hillback, IRLC President

Summer in the Indian River Lakes Region always offers a wide variety of great outdoor activities such as hiking, paddling, swimming and picnicking while taking in the area's natural beauty. At other times spending quiet time with friends and family by the water or among the trees; or sitting quietly watching the moon rise or listening to the loons and smiling to yourself can feel like the perfect way to connect with nature. This summer nature even provided a little extra spice for us with some weird weather and an abundance of bugs! Can anyone remember ever seeing 4 inches of rain in an hour or so many deer flies that they were fighting each other just for the right to bite you? Now most of the loons and the lake people are heading off to their wintering grounds, duck hunters are having their day, and the trees are losing the grip on their leaves. For me, there is something special about summer sliding into fall that delineates the passing of another year and focuses my thoughts on the future – much more than New Year's Day ever does.

The passage of another year is also an appropriate moment to remember that our Conservancy is responsible for conserving our almost 2000 acres of land and protecting its ecological diversity *in perpetuity*, which my grand kids like to remind me is a really, really, really long time! It is an obligation we take on with great pride and a clear focus.

Keeping this in focus, our Board and many of our members and volunteers have had a particularly busy summer. With a North Country winter rushing toward us, it is appropriate to reflect on our summer progress and share with you some of what we are looking forward to.

At the beginning of the summer, with the support of a significant state grant and guided by an expert consultant, we began an intensive round of telephone interviews and meetings with a number of IRLC members and non members from the area to better understand your conservation related perceptions, interests and priorities. To all who participated – thank you. If you did not, we would still love to hear from you at any time: in person, by phone, email, or letter. With the ideas and information we gathered, and some additional consulting help, we asked ourselves two critical and fundamental questions: “How can the IRLC be a more effective local land trust?” and “How can we ensure the IRLC's long term viability?” Our work to answer these questions has helped sharpen our focus and clarify our goals and plans. For example, based on the feedback we received, our Outreach Team defined, and began detailed planning, a significant expansion of our

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Recognize this turtle? See article on page 6.



photo: Angelena M. Ross

The goal of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy is to preserve the natural character of the area, with a focus on protecting clean water, fish and wildlife, and the scenic vistas along the shores of the lakes and the Indian River and to educate ourselves and the community about the natural habitat in which we live.

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President's Report (cont.)

community outreach, education, and communication activities. You will see the results of their work in a number of ways beginning next spring. During the summer the Stewardship Team and a number of member volunteers made major enhancements to our trail system, with two new trails cut and marked, and kiosks placed at many of our trail heads. They are now planning a number of other significant improvements beginning next spring and summer.

In September we were able to add almost 500 acres to the land we are conserving. One parcel of 333 acres is predominately wetland and includes almost a mile of Indian River shoreline. This property borders land already under state protection, thereby creating a much larger protected area. The second property (161 acres) is comprised of the land inside the oxbow bend of the Oswegatchie River across the river from the hamlet of Oxbow. With 1.75 miles of river shoreline plus wetlands, grasslands, forested areas and a beautiful pond, this property is unique and particularly beautiful. We are now beginning to develop comprehensive stewardship plans for each.

In a half-day long strategic review near the end of the summer, the Board reaffirmed our commitment to the three key words that guide our actions: PROTECT * LEARN * ENJOY. We clarified our short and long term objectives, reevaluated our organizational capabilities and needs, and clearly defined specific strategic goals for the IRLC through 2014. We look forward to sharing details of these plans, programs and activities with all of you. Even after our summer long evaluation and planning effort, we recognize we need to continue to learn more about the hopes and expectations of the people who live, work and play in the Indian River Lakes area we serve. We need and value your feedback, your ideas, and your suggestions. Please let us know what you think. As an all volunteer organization we also need and



Volunteers load the kiosk onto Mike Bolton's boat for its trip across Grass Lake to its new home on the Mark A.F. Baker Island Preserve.

value your involvement. Please let us know how you might be interested in helping us make the Indian River Lakes area a better place to live, work and play.

As you can see it has been a productive and exciting summer for the IRLC, and we are confident the future of Your Conservancy will be even more successful and exciting! Thank you for your ideas and opinions, your support and your involvement.

IRLC's fourth trail kiosk is installed at the head of our newest trail on the Mark A.F Baker Island.



About the IRLC

Formed in 1998 to conserve critical lands in the Indian River Lakes area of Northern New York, the IRLC is a non-profit land trust with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status operating in a manner consistent with the published standards of the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization



Visit us on Facebook to keep up on what's happening on the Lakes over the winter months! We also invite you to "Like" us and post your own updates, photos and videos of what's happening on *your* lake as the ice forms and the snow settles . . .

Type "*Indian River Lakes Conservancy*" into the Search box.

www.IndianRiverLakes.org

Scarlet Tanager

As early May begins to dawn, the bird songs of the Indian River Lakes forests and edges become more confusing. Visitors and residents have been listening to that symbol of spring, the American Robin, for several weeks. But, just as they become confident they know the local robin's voice, a new call is heard, one that seems to be a strange variation on a familiar theme - something that sounds like a robin with a whistle stuck in its throat. A second robin-like song sounds like the bird has a terrible cold and is in a hurry to sing before it expires. You say "that can't be a robin" and hopefully arouse yourself to look for the singer. Usually the leaves are not out yet but the songster is still elusive, hiding behind branches and often remaining high in the tree. The fates finally favor you and a brilliant red orange bird with black wings becomes visible, then is quickly gone. If you have never seen this vision before you may be dumbfounded that such a bird really exists in the forests of northeastern North America. This spectacular member of what is generally a tropical bird family, the Scarlet Tanager, has returned to the Indian River Lakes forests.

The Scarlet Tanager, like many of the summer denizens of our eastern forests, is really not "our" bird. It belongs to the tropics where it spends a majority of the year. Sojourning annually to North America to breed where there is more space, fewer predators and less competition, this magnificent species graces us with its presence from May to early October. I can still remember where and when I first saw this striking bird even though that was nearly a half a century ago. Words are insufficient to adequately describe a male as a sunbeam lights up his plumage so I won't try. Suffice it

to say that, in my opinion, any nearby male Northern Cardinal should hide under a bush to avoid comparison with the tanager's tropical fire.

Most Scarlet Tanagers arrive at our latitude in the first two to three weeks of May. The males generally precede the green and comparatively dull-colored females by a few days. Usually the first migrants are seen at Derby Hill Bird Observatory in Oswego County and other concentration sites along Lake Ontario. There are flight days during the second week of May when the generally nocturnal songbird migration may continue for several hours after sunrise with birds flying west to east parallel to shore. I have seen as many as 100 mostly male Scarlet Tanagers on such occasions as they flash past in a spectacular parade. Most individuals probably are on territory in our area by late May.

To actually understand the number of tanagers present, as with most forest songbirds, one needs to know the song. People who only see an occasional individual think of this species as being rare. Actually it's a fairly common breeder in our region and one may often hear 15-20 or more in a few hours afield. The male sings vigorously throughout the establishment of territory, courtship, mating, nest building, incubation and early brood rearing stage. While some reduction in song may occur while raising young, singing continues through July.

The Scarlet Tanager nest usually contains 3-7 eggs that the female primarily incubates for about 2 weeks. If all goes well, the young will fledge from the nest in two more weeks and each parent will care for part of the brood until the young are independent. Unfortunately for the tanagers things



do regularly go wrong, with predation of nest/eggs and young a frequent and normal occurrence. In addition this species is a frequent victim of brood parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird. Depending on the timing of this loss of eggs or young, this species may reneest. However, as young need to be migration ready by mid-August, there is little room for error. The species raise only one brood in a breeding season and if delayed too long must wait till next year.

For successful pairs, our forests are a smorgasbord of foods needed to prepare for the coming difficult migration that will take them to Central and South America to winter from Panama to Amazonia. Most of these foods are animal, with insects predominating. During migration and on the wintering

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Gerry Smith is a senior Northern New York ornithologist and consulting ecologist. Gerry is a devoted friend and advocate for grass roots land trusts and the dedicated volunteers who share his love of nature.

2011 MEMBERSHIP

The mission of IRLC couldn't be accomplished without the support of our members and donors. As of 11/1/11, contributions have been received this year from the following:

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We value the contributions of all our donors and regret any errors or omissions. Please let us know so we can correct them promptly.

Special thanks to those who contributed to our 2011 Festival of the Lakes Auction:

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Member Profile

Shari Scott - Clayton



Why does Shari support the Conservancy?

“The Indian River Lakes are a great local resource and preserving them is important to me.”

“The Indian River Lakes Conservancy is a wonderful way to preserve all my favorite paddling locations. I've lived in Watertown since 1994 and have been a paddling member of the IRLC since 2001. Putting my kayak on top of my car and heading north was one of my favorite pastimes. My normal destinations are Red Lake, Butterfield Lake, the Indian River above Theresa, Millsite, Sixberry, Muskellunge and Grass Lakes. These waters are gorgeous in all seasons. I now live in Clayton and paddle the St Lawrence River, but get back to the Indian River Lakes whenever possible.”

Scarlet Tanager (cont.)

grounds they eat substantial amounts of fruit. This is a pattern exhibited by many North American migrants, such as the Eastern Kingbird, and reflects the abundance of fruit in primary tropical forest. By August the male Scarlet Tanager is molting into a green plumage similar to that of his mate and offspring. Quietly by the middle of the month they all begin to slip south with most going by September and a few lingering to early October. Very rare after mid-October, any tanager present locally should be carefully observed and photographed as the probability of a misplaced Summer Tanager or Western Tanager is as likely as our Scarlet Tanager.

Each year as this beautiful bird departs I wonder about its long-term future. There is little question that many Neotropical migrant songbirds have declined by huge amounts over the last 60-65 years. Estimates for some species suggest the declines are as much

as 50-70% of former population levels. Fragmentation and destruction of forest at both ends of their journey are a primary factor. Such fragmentation on the breeding grounds allows easy access to cowbirds affecting reproductive success. Throw in global climate change and these birds are competing in a crap shoot for survival made worse by impacts we as a species cause. We also can help meet their needs and do penance for our impacts by preserving high quality forest habitat and managing it well. Whatever the immediate future holds for a Scarlet Tanager departing Columbia for the Indian River Lakes Region it can rest assured, if it survives the perils of migration, the Grand Lake Reserve will be waiting. Let us continue to contribute our part to assuring that Scarlet Tanagers in 2050 have a place to raise the next generation of their kind so that they may gladden the hearts of future generations of our kind.

Know where this is?



*This photo was take on one of the IRLC's trails. Send us an e-mail if you can identify the location of this "elbow" tree: IndianRiverLakes@gmail.com. Correct entries will be entered in a drawing for an IRLC t-shirt. The winner will be notified by e-mail. Deadline for entries 12/31/11
Sorry, IRLC board members, and their immediate family members, are not eligible.*

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[If you prefer to keep your newsletter intact, this membership form is also available online at www.IndianRiverLakes.org](http://www.IndianRiverLakes.org)

A North Country Turtle in Trouble

by Dr. Glenn Johnson

Perhaps due their iconic shells, great longevity and slow movements, turtles form an assemblage of about 320 species that are instantly recognized, and often loved, by nearly everyone. However, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, turtles as a group are declining worldwide, faster than nearly every other vertebrate group. Threats include widespread habitat loss, exploitation for food and for the pet trade, and fragmentation of habitats by roads and agricultural fields.

New York State is home to about 12 species of native turtles, excluding the sea turtles sometimes found in our waters. Of these, seven may be found in and around the North Country and one, the Blanding's turtle, is perhaps the most special and clearly the most threatened. They are imperiled for two compelling reasons. First, Blanding's turtles, like many other species, are very slow to replace themselves within their populations. Females do not become sexually mature until they reach about 20 years of age, their clutch size is lower than other similarly-sized turtles and up to 90% of the nests they make are either destroyed by predators such as skunks and raccoons or are placed in agricultural fields where the eggs get shaded out as the summer progresses and the corn grows high. The second reason is related to the way they move about the landscape. Blanding's turtles spend most of their time in the pools and channels found in wetlands dominated by shrubs, such as willow



SUNY Potsdam student Alaina White with a Blanding's turtle. Typical habitat is seen in the background. Photo: Glenn Johnson

and buttonbush. It is in these places that they look for their fish, snail and insect prey and seek out each other during the spring mating season. They also spend the northern winters in these wetlands, burrowed down in the soft muck under the shrub hummocks. While many of these kinds of wetlands have been drained and filled in since Europeans began to settle in the region, today most of these are now largely protected, thanks to conservation organizations like land trusts. The problem for Blanding's turtles is that the females must leave the wetlands in early summer to seek open sandy areas to deposit their eggs. Recent studies have shown that males and young individuals also spend significant time wandering across the countryside as well. These movements very often put them in harm's way as roads have fragmented the landscape. Given a reproductive strategy that takes a female Blanding's turtle a lifetime to replace herself, an early death along a highway can lead to a rapid extinction of local populations.

Blanding's turtle, with its characteristic domed shell and yellow chin.

Photo: Gerry Lemmo



Glenn Johnson is a professor and Chair of the Biology Department at SUNY Potsdam, where he teaches ecology, conservation biology and vertebrate biology. He is a co-author of the book "The Amphibians and Reptiles of New York State: Identification, Natural History and Conservation".

Recognizing a Blanding's Turtle

Recognizing a Blanding's turtle is fairly straightforward; however, it is sometimes easy to confuse them with other species found in the Indian River Lakes region.



Photo: James Gibbs

Snapping turtles get much larger, have no yellow chin, and the upper shell often shows a keel while the back of the shell is saw-toothed.



Photo: James Gibbs

Painted turtles are flatter than the Blanding's and have yellow or red stripes on the head, neck and tail. Some folks call them "sun turtles".

Both painted and snapping turtles may be found in the same areas as Blanding's turtles and they are both much more common. Less common in our area are the stinkpot (or common musk turtle, found in most of the Indian River Lakes), map turtle (look for them in Black Lake), wood turtles and spotted turtles.

Man vs. Milfoil

Aquatic Invasives: Eurasian Water Milfoil

During the summer of 1998, I noticed new aquatic vegetation off the shore of my property on Mud Lake. I swam out and pulled some up. This was the start of what has become a bit of an obsession with Eurasian Water milfoil. From 1998 and as an ongoing process, I have researched milfoil and ways to control it. **Here is what I have learned:**

- Milfoil was introduced to the U.S. early in the twentieth century. It was originally imported for use as an aquatic plant for fish tanks.
- Milfoil came to the Indian River Lakes area on boats that brought fragments of the plant from other waters. When milfoil first appeared, most people were not aware that boats needed to be inspected and cleaned carefully before launching to remove milfoil and other plant fragments.
- Initially, for us in the northern part of New York State, milfoil was not a problem. We were protected by cold winters with deep ice and snow cover that prevented the plant from gaining a foothold. Life was good....
- But our winter weather has become sporadic and weaker. Some years we have had little ice and little to no snow cover on the lakes. The milfoil over-wintered and dense beds of milfoil began to appear.
- Milfoil reproduces by two types of fragmentation: The first is caused by people, by means of watercraft being operated through milfoil, the operators unaware that they are creating thousands of plant fragments, which become new milfoil plants. The second, auto-fragmentation, is something the milfoil plant does on its own (kind of like a "B" monster movie). An existing milfoil stem grows its own set of roots and then breaks away from the main plant, drifting away to become a new plant.

Eradicating Milfoil

Once milfoil begins to grow and spread, the most common question becomes "How do we get rid of it?" The following are methods of control that are commonly used to combat milfoil:

Manual eradication: hand pulling, suction dredging, raking and collecting plant material from the water for disposal.

Bottom barriers (benthic barrier): a fabric mat that is placed on the lake bottom to suppress weed growth.

Cutting: using a machine to cut milfoil below the waterline, then collecting plant material from water for disposal.

Biological controls: using specific insects (primarily weevils and moths) to destroy milfoil, or sterilized Grass Carp that eat it.

Chemical: Chemical aquatic herbicides that kill milfoil. An example of a commonly used chemical is 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D).

Which Method is best?

This question can be controversial. Perhaps the best decisions can be made by weighing the pros and cons.

Manual Eradication:

Pros: *Can be performed by anyone with a small amount of training; Little to no cost to hand pull weeds by landowners and/or volunteers; No permit needed for hand pulling.*

Cons: *Time consuming; Massive effort to eradicate a large area; Can be expensive if professional divers are used; Suction dredging requires a NYS DEC permit.*

Bottom Barriers:

Pros: *Simple on small scale around docks etc.; Doesn't involve chemicals; Not expensive on small scale.*

Cons: *Massive effort on large scale; Expensive on large scale; Requires NYS DEC permit.*



Eurasian Water Milfoil exists in varying degrees in each of the Indian River Lakes

Biological Controls:

Pros: *In sync with nature; Doesn't involve chemicals. Weevils and moths exist in our environment already. The program just increases their population.*

Cons: *Cost - approximately one dollar per weevil with only one company known providing the service. (Enviro Science Inc.); Requires NYS DEC permit.*

Cutting:

Pros: *Quick results; No permit required unless in area adjacent to a wetlands (Permit required in the Adirondacks).*

Cons: *Does not solve problem. The analogy is "like mowing the grass" and will most likely have to be done several times a season; Machines expensive; Handling cut material is labor intensive and expensive if trucked.*

Chemical Controls:

Pros: *Quick results; Proponents claim 2,4-D is safe.*

Cons: *Controversial; Opponents point to cancer risk; Costly (2,4-D) prices range from \$800.00 to \$1,200.00 an acre; Must be applied by an applicator licensed by NYS.*

(continued)

My Milfoil Eradication System

After researching the milfoil problem and conducting small scale hand-pulling at Mud Lake, I knew I had to become more proficient at this task. I first tried a tool called "Arrowtooth," a metal pole with an inverted V-shaped head. I bought the tool in the summer of 2007, and the "Arrowtooth" worked well. I cleared the area where we launch our boats in short order. But I soon realized that a bigger tool was needed.

After some thought, I constructed my own tool for the job. Using a 2x6x6 foot pressure-treated board I attached large galvanized spikes every 2 inches along its length. The tool is pulled along the top of the silt, pulling the plant from the bed. Here's how it works:

Step 1: Raking

Put the tool into a boat and take it to a milfoil weed bed. Throw the tool on the backside of the bed where it sinks to the bottom. Return to the shore with a rope tied to the end of the tool and pull it in. The first time out with this, I pulled it in with my ATV winch and that worked well. But, after doing it a couple of times I realized that as the tool fills with milfoil it becomes buoyant and I could pull it in by hand. After pulling the rake to the shore, remove the weeds from the tool, by running a knife down the top edge of the tool to cut the weeds in half. The final step is to put the weeds in a trailer and haul them away for compost.

As it worked out, this tool pulls the milfoil up by the roots. It is satisfying to see all the dark brown roots attached to whole plants when you unload the tool.



Rick's home-made milfoil rake. More specific instructions for building this tool are available on our website www.IndianRiverLakes.org.

I must mention that whenever pulling milfoil, whether by hand or with a tool like this, you need to have someone else sweeping for loose pieces. They should do this from a boat or in shallows on foot using a manure rake. These plastic rakes are available from most farm supply stores for about twenty dollars.

Step 2: Handpulling

After I finish raking, I return with my wet suit, snorkel and short fins to go over what I have done with hand pulling. I swim to a target plant, grasp the plant as far down as I can reach, and twirl my hand around the stem(s) until I reach the bottom. At the bottom I put two fingers under the crown of the plant into the root area and then pull the plant from the silt. All motions should be done gently, so you do not fragment the plant. Once the plant is free from the lake bottom, I wrap the stems around the rootball slowly to cut down on the plant shedding silt and to make it easier to carry. I keep swimming and pulling in this matter until I have all that I can carry. At that point I return to the shore and deposit it on shore.

Using this method, I have removed the densest milfoil bed on our lake. The bed was approximately 250 feet long by 75 feet wide. After pulling, most of the bed was bare lake bottom. The following year other native plants filled in the pulled area. Since that time I return to the bed and pull single strands of rooted pieces as they appear or single pieces that are suspended in the new native plants. So far, it's been a system that works.

Milfoil reproduces by two types of fragmentation - the first is caused by people. People commonly operate watercraft through milfoil beds, unaware that they are creating thousands of plant fragments, which drift off to become new milfoil plants.

Thoughts for the Future

I am currently working with the Jefferson County Water Quality Advisory Committee, of which I am a member, to secure grants for milfoil eradication. This may be a tough endeavor in light of the economic climate, but we have already begun to form relationships to tackle the problem collectively. Town supervisors from the Indian River Lakes region, Martha Millett from the Town of Alexandria and Clinton Coolidge from the Town of Theresa, have both attended meetings and have shown a deep interest in the health of our lakes. Meanwhile, IRLC recently formed a board-level team to focus on water-related issues and develop an appropriate strategy for action. In the coming months we will form new relationships and begin creating plans to address water quality.

Meanwhile, we need to get to know each other from lake to lake. Milfoil affects us all and even if you eradicate it, it can return again on another boat. By working together we can create a stronger response to our collective milfoil problem and build relationships that will serve us well in the event another invasive comes our way.

The IRLC is seeking members and friends who are interested in working on this problem. If you are interested, please call Rick at 315.405.1464 or email him at rdwd77@yahoo.com.

ODE NOTES

Meadowhawks - The last thing a mosquito wants to see

As the leaves start to turn, days shorten and become cooler... you may notice bright red or gold dragonflies darting to and fro. These flashes of color are the Meadowhawks (*Sympetrum* sp.), so named for their "hunting" abilities in meadows and fields close to the lakes and wetlands from which they emerged.

Sharing the fall airspace are larger dragonflies such as Variable Darners (*Aeshna interrupta*) and Shadow Darners (*A. umbrosa*) and maybe a few Spreadwing (*Lestes* sp.) damselflies. The Meadowhawks, however, clearly outnumber all others. Seven species were found in New York State during the Natural Heritage Survey (2005-2009). Six species have been found in the IRLC service area: Cherry-faced (*Sympetrum internum*), White-faced (*S. obtrusum*), Ruby (*S. rubicundulum*), Band-winged (*S. semicinctum*), Black (*S. danae*) and, appropriate for the season, the Autumn (*S. vicinum*). Our goal is to find the seventh - the Saffron-winged (*S. costiferum*).

Meadowhawks are in the Skimmer family (*Libellulidae*) and, depending on species, vary in size from 1 to 1 ½ inches. They spend their underwater life cycle phase (nymph) in ponds/ lakes, bogs/fens, and marshy areas or slow flowing waters. Separating the genders is easy - the male bodies are bright to dark red (the exception is the Black Meadowhawk) while the females are yellow to golden brown depending on the species and their age. Some can be identified without netting such as the Band-winged, which sport amber/red through the basal section of the wings, or the Autumns, that have yellow legs. But, when it comes to the Ruby, White-faced, and Cherry-faced species, they can elude identification due to common characteristics. . . not to

mention frequent interbreeding. Some experts posit there is just one species, not three.

While surveying for dragonflies and damselflies, some might be tempted to sample only one or two Meadowhawk individuals, as they look virtually the same from even a short distance.

Further sampling will likely reveal two or more species in an area. And, as noted, they can be difficult to identify even in hand. Just the process of netting can be frustrating. . . since they tend to perch on the tips of vegetation, one of the best ways to net them is a "drop-down" whereupon the insect net is positioned directly over the Meadowhawk and quickly brought to the ground. But, if you are too slow, the Meadowhawk will pull a "Houdini" (immediately scurrying out from under the net not to be seen again).

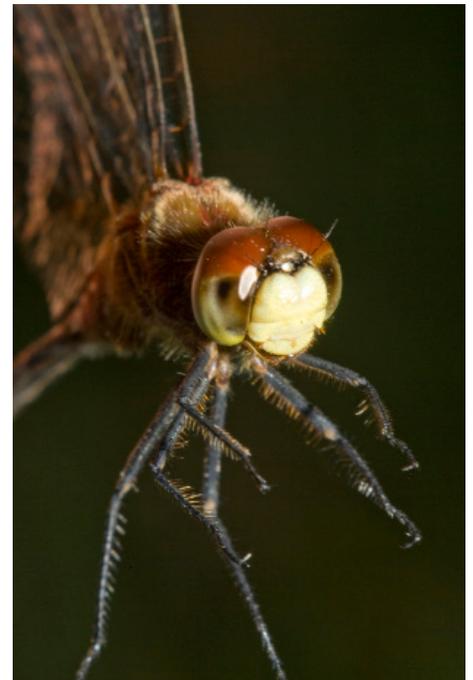
Regardless of who is who, Meadowhawks are fun to observe. They rocket off and quickly return with their prey - deerflies, mosquitoes, and even yellow jackets - whatever is in season. It takes just 5 minutes to quaff a deerfly and only 14 seconds to down a mosquito, wings and legs fluttering earthward. Meadowhawks are always hungry.

From the end of June through October (and sometimes into November), you will find Meadowhawks flying and eating,

continued on page 10



Cherry-faced Meadowhawk - Male



White-faced Meadowhawk - Male

The Diehls are well-known local conservationists and nature photographers. Their most recent article on Damselflies and Dragonflies was published in the June 2011 issue of the New York State Conservationist. They are active participants in the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI).

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Meadowhawks (cont.)

weather and food permitting. They are versatile and hardy. During the hottest days of summer, they will perch almost on their heads to limit their profile to the sun. As it gets colder, they select overnight perches, usually in trees, where the early morning sun will warm them so they can begin to fly. Autumn Meadowhawks have been observed flying at 44°F. In colder temperatures they will spend the night protected by leaves and thus are able to withstand frosts, light snows, and several consecutive nights in the mid-20s.

If Meadowhawks don't favor a spot near you, hike the IRLC trails to Butterfield Lake or Grass Lake on a sunny day. As you enjoy the fall colors, take the time to observe the red and gold flashes of Meadowhawks as they grab a snack (close-focus binoculars will help). Unlike the Meadowhawks, you'll need to pack a lunch.



Band-winged Meadowhawk - Female



Autumn Meadowhawk



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