

Pygmy Snaketail

Ophiogomphus howei

STATUS	Special Concern 	Not Listed 
Special Concern 	Not Listed 	Not Listed 



© DENIS DOUCET

Species Description

The Pygmy Snaketail is a small (3.1-3.7 cm long) clubtail dragonfly and one of the smallest dragonflies in North America. It is black with a bright green thorax (front end of body) and bright yellow markings on its back and tail. The bottom of its wings (1.9-2.1 cm) have a characteristic yellowish tint. The aquatic larva (1.9-2.2 cm long) is brown and elongate.

Occurs in Eastern North America; known in four watersheds in central and western New Brunswick.



Habitat

The Pygmy Snaketail larvae require larger (>10 m across), naturally and swiftly flowing rivers with clean water and significant areas of fine sand or pea-sized gravel substrate on the river bottom. Adults spend the majority of their time in the canopy of surrounding forests.



© LEONORA ENKING, FELICIA

Larger, swiftly flowing river



© ERIC LEBEL

Forest canopy

The rarely observed adults emerge in late June and fly until early July.

Interesting Points

- Larvae develop in rivers for at least two years. After transforming into adults they live less than a month.
- Research surveys most often look for the shed skins of larvae (called exuviae) that are left behind on river banks as adults emerge, since adults spend most of their time in the forest canopy.



© DENIS DOUJET

Yellowish tint at base of wings of Pygmy Snaketail

Similar Species

Other clubtail dragonflies:

No yellowish tint at base of wings.



© ALAIN BELLIVEAU

Dragonhunter

Band-winged Meadowhawk and Cherry-faced Meadowhawk:

Yellowish tint at base of wings, but body mostly cherry-coloured.



© SAGE ROSS

Band-winged Meadowhawk

Threats to Survival

- Impoundment of flowing waters, creating unsuitable habitat both above and below dams.
- Pollution and resulting toxic chemical accumulation.
- Sedimentation and changes in water quality due to sewage, agricultural and forestry run-off.
- Invasive species including certain aquatic plants, crayfish, and fish that predate on insects and alter aquatic habitats.
- Road-kill on roads near rivers.



© PETER (P. R. F.) FLOCK

The impoundment of waters creates unsuitable habitat



© ALAIN BELLIVEAU

Natural vegetation buffer along shoreline

How You Can Help

Help keep rivers clean by maintaining a proper septic system and by adopting good shoreline stewardship practices like leaving a buffer of natural vegetation at the river edge. Minimize use of products that may runoff and contaminate habitat, including salt, fertilizers, and pesticides. Join a naturalist club and learn more about dragonflies!

Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: AC CDC (506) 364-2660, or NB DNR (506) 453-3826

Info: www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca

Sighting Reports: www.accdc.com