

# The Ringed Boghaunter – *Williamsonia lintneri*

## Adults

The Ringed Boghaunter is a rare dragonfly on the Maine Threatened Species list. At about 1.5 inches in length, it is small with a dark body and grey eyes.

Its most distinctive feature is a series of dull orange rings encircling most of the abdominal segments. Its wings are colorless, except for a very small patch of amber at the base.

The dark coloration and low flight habit make this species inconspicuous, even in flight, and it is easily overlooked.

The Ringed Boghaunter is among the first dragonflies to emerge in the spring. If you see a small adult dragonfly in southern Maine in late April or early May there is a reasonable chance that it is this species. Adults are most often seen in sunny uplands, along woodland trails, dirt roads, or on tree trunks near breeding sites on warm (>60°F), sunny days, from late April to early June.

## Collecting Evidence

Try to photograph or take videos of dull orange rings on the abdominal segments and eye color.

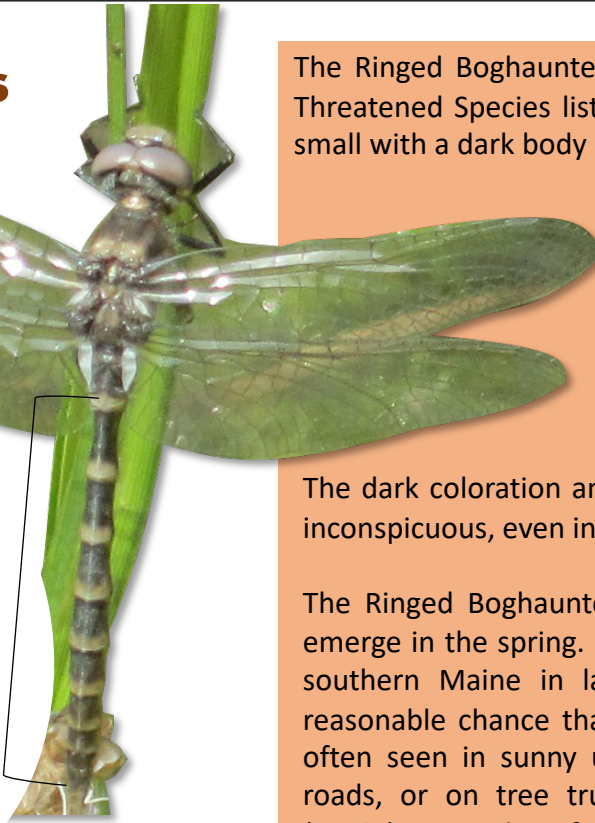


Photo: Ringed boghaunter adult (wings are see-through)

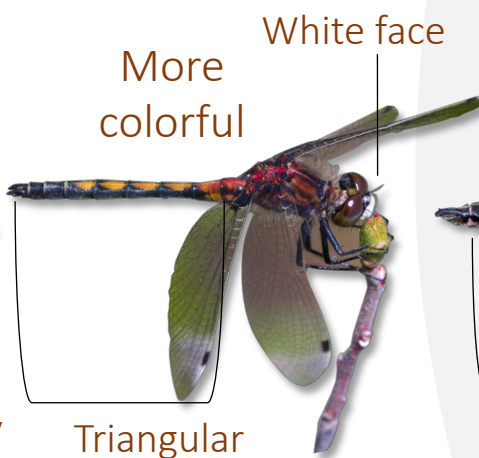
## Common Look-alikes to be Aware Of

**Ebony Boghaunter**  
*Williamsonia fletcheri*



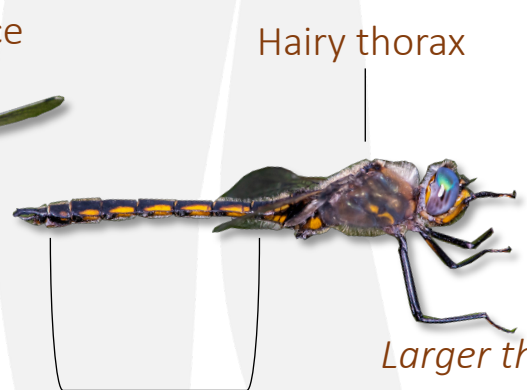
Pale rings only at base of abdomen  
Eyes may be grey or green

**Hudsonian Whiteface**  
*Leucorrhinia hudsonica*



White face  
More colorful  
Triangular abdominal markings

**Beaverpond Baskettail**  
*Epitheca canis*



Hairy thorax  
Larger than boghaunter  
Abdominal spots on sides, not rings



# The Ringed Boghaunter – *Williamsonia lintneri*

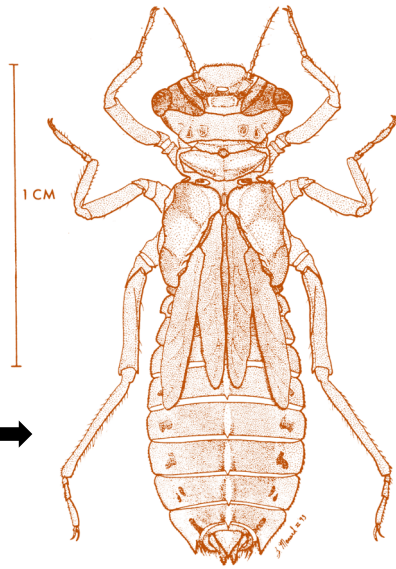
The shed larval skins or exuviae of the boghaunters (genus *Williamsonia*) are found on live or dead vegetation that extends above the water level, typically on sedges or woody shrub stems. Search in wetlands that have soupy sphagnum and wear waders as water temps can still be cold in late April and May.

Boghaunter exuviae are distinguished from other early season species by the combination of two sets of characters: the presence of **lateral spines on only abdominal segment 9** (others have spines on at least segments 8 AND 9) and **well-developed dorsal hooks on abdominal segments 3-9**.

Image on right: example of a freshly emerged dragonfly and its associated exuvia.



## Immatures / Exuvia



## Collecting Evidence



If you see exuviae that you think have these characteristics, photograph them in a way that emphasizes the lateral spines and the dorsal hooks or else collect them in a small vial or bag (anything that prevents them from being crushed). Leave the bag or vial lid open for a day or two to allow moisture to evaporate before closing it.

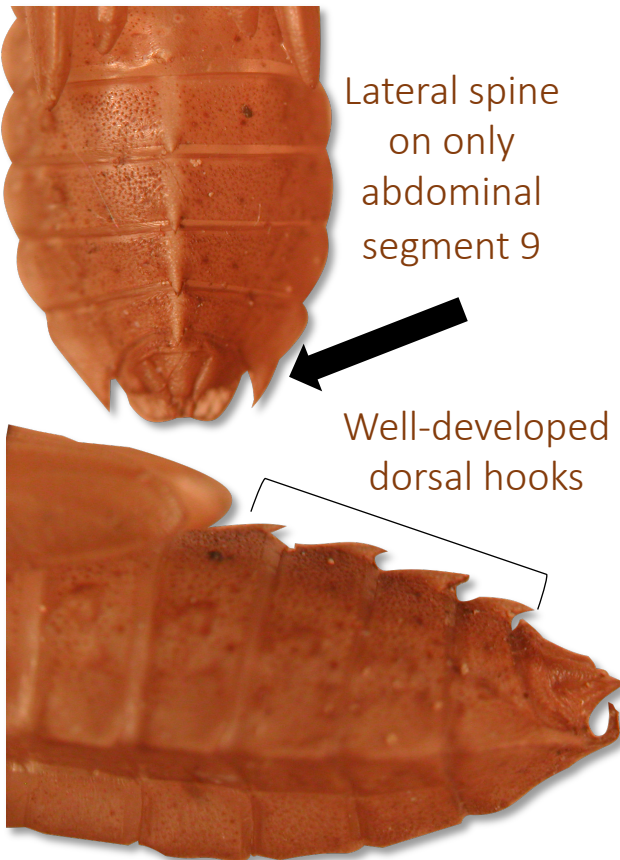
If you take photographs or collect exuviae, record the date and location (GPS coordinates are ideal, but any specific location information is helpful road names, town, wetland name, etc.). Photographs or a description of habitat where individuals were observed or collected is also useful.



Contact Mark Ward ([akamward@gmail.com](mailto:akamward@gmail.com)) and/or Ron Butler ([butler@maine.edu](mailto:butler@maine.edu)) with observations or specimens



Learn more at [www.maineentosociety.org](http://www.maineentosociety.org)



Lateral spine on only abdominal segment 9

Well-developed dorsal hooks

# More Information about Other Species

Three early flying dragonfly species in Maine with which an adult Ringed Boghaunter might most easily be confused include:

The **Ebony Boghaunter** (*Williamsonia fletcheri*) is very similar in size and appearance, occupies similar habitats, and shares many of the same behavioral traits, but flies slightly later in the season (early-May through mid-June). The easiest way to distinguish this species is that **it has only one or two obvious pale rings at the base of the abdomen; the rest of the abdomen is dark**. Female and young male Ebony Boghaunters have grey eyes like those of the ringed boghaunter, but a mature male Ebony Boghaunter's eyes may be green.

The **Hudsonian Whiteface** (*Leucorrhinia hudsonica*) also flies early in the season, occupies the same habitat, shares the tendency to alight on roads and paths near wooded areas, and is much more abundant. It is similar in size, but is **more colorful with red, orange, or yellow on the thorax, and abdominal markings which are triangular as opposed to ring-like** in the Ringed Boghaunter. Additionally, **the face of the Hudsonian Whiteface is white** instead of orange-brown. (There are several other species of whitefaces in Maine that emerge slightly later than the Hudsonian Whiteface, but all have the distinctive white face).

The **Beaverpond Baskettail** (*Epitheca canis*) is the earliest flying of the baskettails (genus *Epitheca*) and its flight season overlaps with that of the Ringed Boghaunter in Maine. It has **yellow-orange markings that are on the sides of the abdominal segments, not in rings**. It has a **hairy thorax** and is **larger than the ringed boghaunter** in length (~1.7 inches) and its **abdomen is wider** than the slender abdomen of the ringed boghaunter. This species rarely perches on the ground or tree trunks, but may be found in uplands adjacent to breeding wetlands.

## Ebony Boghaunter



## Hudsonian Whiteface



## Beaverpond Baskettail



# More Information about Other Species

## Common Baskettail



## Uhler's Sundragon



## American Emerald



Other early dragonfly species that could cause some confusion:

The **Common Baskettail** (*Epitheca cynosura*) and **Uhler's Sundragon** (*Helocordulia uhleri*), both have early flight seasons that overlap the Ringed Boghaunter's and have yellow-orange abdominal markings, but they are larger than Ringed Boghaunters, and do not have ringed abdominal markings. Both species tend to have a **hairy thorax** and usually have **dark markings at the base of the wings**, and rarely perch on the ground or tree trunks.

The **American Emerald** (*Cordulia shurtleffii*) is out early, but it lacks abdominal rings except for a **pale ring at the base of the abdomen; the rest of the abdomen is dark**. In this way it more closely resembles the Ebony Boghaunter than the Ringed Boghaunter, but is larger in size (~1.8 inches) than the Ebony Boghaunter. The American Emerald has a **hairy bronze-brown thorax**, and its eyes become bright green when mature.

