



## NATURAL HISTORY OF ODONATA (Damselflies & Dragonflies)



Odonates are among the oldest insect lineages on the planet and some of the earliest animals to fly. They are iconic symbols and folklore referents in many of the world's cultures, they are consumed as food in some countries, and in others they are considered to have medicinal properties. In North America, the popularity of this insect order is reflected in dragonfly art, inn and tavern names, jewelry, lamp shades, coffee mugs, t-shirts, and tattoos. The advent of regional field guides in recent decades has also elevated the popularity of dragonfly 'watching' to that previously afforded only to birds and butterflies. In this seminar, we will explore odonate topics including: current taxonomy, evolutionary history, regional and global diversity, morphology, characters used in identification, field methods and identification resources, reproductive biology and development, behavioral ecology, population trends in the context of the 'insect apocalypse', and odonate conservation. Each session will include discussions of recent research related to that evening's topic. Participants will also be invited (as time allows) to share their own odonate images for group consideration. No previous background in entomology is required for this seminar - only an interest in odonates.

**Feb 3, 5, 10, 12, and 17**  
**7-9 PM EDT**  
**\$225**

*Participants need to have a Zoom account (<https://zoom.us> sign up for zoom is free). You will receive a secure link to join the instructor before each class. Classes will be recorded so participants can review them or make up missed ones.*

**REGISTER**

**CALENDAR**

**GENERAL INFO**

**Dr. Ron Butler** ([butler@maine.edu](mailto:butler@maine.edu)) is a broadly experienced animal ecologist and Professor Emeritus at the University of Maine at Farmington, where he taught courses in Zoology, Entomology, Ornithology, Ecology, and Conservation Biology. He also co-taught a snorkeling-intensive field course focused on coral reef fishes on St John (USVI) for a number of years. While Ron spent the first part of his career conducting research with seabirds in Maine, Newfoundland, and Antarctica, for the past several decades his work has focused on ecologically important groups of insects. He helped plan and coordinate several state-wide citizen science initiatives including the Maine Damselfly and Dragonfly Survey ([mdds.umf.maine.edu](http://mdds.umf.maine.edu)), the Maine Butterfly Survey ([mbs.umf.maine.edu](http://mbs.umf.maine.edu)), and the Maine Bumble Bee Atlas ([mainebumblebeeatlas.umf.maine.edu](http://mainebumblebeeatlas.umf.maine.edu)). Ron has co-authored over 50 peer-reviewed publications and technical reports, **Butterflies of Maine and the Canadian Maritime Provinces** (2023), and **Damselflies and Dragonflies of Maine and the Canadian Maritime Provinces** (in preparation). Ron lives in the western mountains of Maine where he continues to collaborate with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on regional insect conservation initiatives.