

Odonata and other insects on the Kuhlanapo Preserve from June through Nov 2025

Efforts to identify dragonflies on the Wright Ranch acreage added Paddle-tailed Darner to the species list. This is the fourth darner and 18th listed species. I also photographed an interesting moth, a beetle and a true bug.

Odonata

Both of the common damselflies at the preserve (Pacific Forktail and Tule Bluet) were widespread and easy to see from spring through fall. Some early season dragonfly species, especially Common Whitetails and California Darners, were commonly observed. However, with the exception of Western Pondhawks, there were not many adults on the wing in late summer and fall. Beginning in August, I did get multiple binocular views of flying mosaic darners that did not fit the seasonality or colors of California Darner nor the color pattern of Blue-eyed Darner. I was not able to make an identification until September when I got definitive photos of a pair of Paddle-tailed Darners near the third gate. I posted the observation on iNaturalist and got agreement from a recognized expert on odonate taxonomy. This is the first Lake County observation of this species on iNaturalist. Most California records are coastal or in the Cascade and Sierra Mountains. The immature stages most commonly occur in forested lentic habitats with dense shoreline vegetation. Those characteristics are a good fit for the southern end of the channel.

Other Insects

I posted photos of the following species on iNaturalist and got agreement on the identifications from other participants for each:

Strawberry Crown Moth. Adults of this Clear-winged Moth (Family Sesiidae) are beautiful diurnal wasp mimics, but the larvae can be economically important pests on strawberry farms. The caterpillars eat the crowns and upper roots of strawberries, caneberries and roses. The individual that I photographed along the channel was landed on a Himalayan Blackberry thicket. It was missing quite a few scales on the wings and abdomen. For anyone interested, there are many photos of pristine adults on iNaturalist:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/319098-Synanthedon-bibionipennis>

After finding the moth I watched for additional individuals, but I didn't see another the rest of the summer.

Cobalt Milkweed Beetle. I saw adults of this Leaf Beetle (Family Chrysomelidae) on Narrow-leaf Milkweed near the corral. Larvae feed on the roots and adults on the leaves and flowers of milkweeds, sequestering toxins into their bodies as they feed. The bright coloration of the adults warns predators that they are unpalatable.

Large Milkweed Bug. There were many red and black nymphs and adults of this Seed Bug (Family Lygaeidae) on the Narrow-leaf Milkweed near the corral. Both life stages suck juices from the leaves, stems and seeds. Like the Cobalt Milkweed Beetle, their colors warn predators of their unpalatability.