



# *the Bluestem Banner*



Fall 2018

Tallgrass Ontario

Volume 17, No. 3

*Tallgrass Ontario will identify and facilitate the conservation of tallgrass communities by coordinating programs and services to aid individuals, groups and agencies.*

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## *September Tallgrass Prairie*

Go to [www.tallgrassontario.org](http://www.tallgrassontario.org) to download the Bluestem Banner in colour.

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**A New Family to Canada with the Discovery of the Pleasing Lacewing *Nallachus americanus* (McLachlan) (Neuroptera: Dilaridae) at the Ojibway Prairie Complex in Windsor, Ontario**

T. J. Preney (1)\* and R. J. L. Jones

(1) Ojibway Prairie Complex, City of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, N9C 4E8  
email, tpreney@citywindsor.ca

**Scientific Note** *J. ent. Soc. Ont.* 148: 39–41

The pleasing lacewings (Neuroptera: Dilaridae) are a poorly studied and rarely collected group with seven species in the New World (Bowles *et al.* 2015). *Nallachus americanus* (McLachlan) is the only species in eastern North America and is currently known from 19 states (Bowles *et al.* 2015). The observation of a single male *Nallachus americanus* in an urban residential backyard immediately adjacent to Spring Garden Natural Area in Windsor, Ontario represents the first Canadian record of the family Dilaridae.

*FIGURE 1.*



\* Author to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

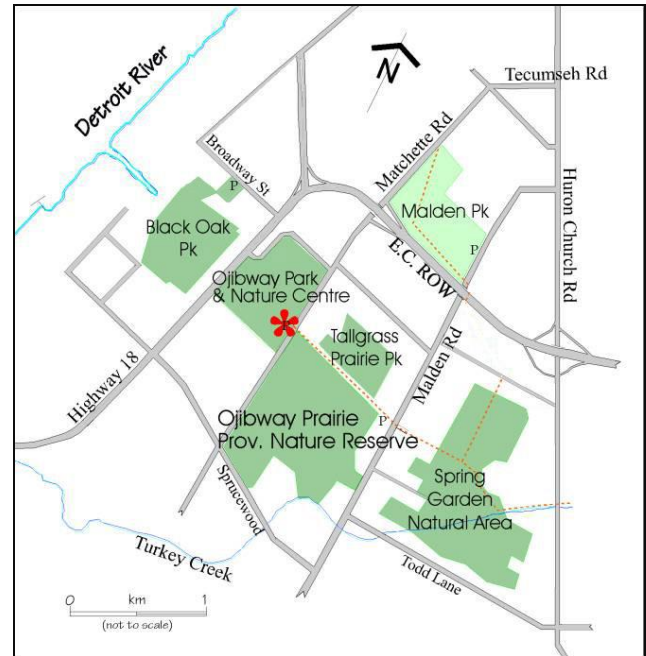
Here we review our observations and discuss the habitat from where it was collected including photo documentation.

The Spring Garden Natural Area (Spring Garden) is one of five closely associated natural blocks located in west Windsor, Ontario, collectively known as the Ojibway Prairie Complex. Spring Garden makes up approximately 117 hectares of the total 244-hectare complex and includes prairie, savannah and Carolinian species. Naturalized drains, meadow marshes and swamp forests also provide habitat for wetland species.

The complex is most notable for its tremendous biodiversity in an urban landscape. A comprehensive terrestrial invertebrate study undertaken in the complex yielded 2217 species (Paiero *et al.* 2010). In addition, a BioBlitz held in the Ojibway Prairie Complex in 2014 discovered 12 new invertebrate species to Canada, which is another testament to its vast biodiversity (Gardner-Costa *et al.* 2014).

On 15 July 2017, a 400W metal halide light and white cotton sheet were set up to casually observe and photograph the nocturnal insect diversity in Spring Garden Natural Area (42.261484° -83.048819°). No specimens were collected and only digital photographs were obtained. A single male *Nallachus americanus* specimen landed on the sheet at approximately 23:00 (Fig. 1). A voucher specimen was not collected, but several high-quality digital macro photographs were taken to document the observation. S. Paiero (University of Guelph) confirmed the identification as *N. americanus*; it is the only species of pleasing lacewing known from eastern North America, leaving no concern of confusing it with other species.

### Ojibway Prairie Complex



42.2646° -83.0750° (decimal degrees)

MAP © – City of Windsor

The male, distinguished from the female by its pectinate antennae (Carpenter 1947), was found in a residential backyard immediately adjacent to a mature oak and hickory forested section (Fig. 2). The lower limbs of many of the mature oaks are dead and could provide microhabitat for *N. americanus* whose larvae develop under the bark and consume soft-bodied arthropods (Oswald 1998).

The dominant groundcover nearest to the sighting is thick sensitive fern, *Onoclea sensibilis* L. (Onocleaceae). The leaf litter is thick and made up mostly of oak leaves, which persist largely unchanged all season long. The soil is deep, rich, fine and sandy.



**FIGURE 2.** Sampling site and adjacent habitat where *Nallachus americanus* was photographed (Spring Garden Natural Area, Windsor, Ontario).

This record is an example of how amateur natural historians can play an important role in identifying and recording their local biodiversity. The nature of our light trapping observations was casual and the encounter with *N. americanus* was strictly incidental. While photographing various taxa at the sheet, a small (~10 mm) moth-like insect with erect pectinate antennae and feathery wings caught our attention. The photos are high quality and are more than sufficient to record *N. americanus* in Ontario. No other attempts were made to locate this species. Steyskal (1944) collected 27 *N. americanus* specimens from nearby Detroit, Michigan; thus, it is likely this species has been present in Canada all along, simply undetected, perhaps due to its apparent rarity and moth-like appearance. Since little is known about the extent of its range and ongoing occurrence in Ontario, future observations should be noted and a voucher specimen should be collected if practical.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Steve Paiero (University of Guelph) for encouraging us to submit our sighting to the journal and for reviewing and providing constructive criticism along the way.

## References

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*This article was first published in December 2017 in the [Journal of the Entomological Society of Ontario](#) (JESO Volume 148, 2017). Tom Preney is the Biodiversity Coordinator at the Ojibway Prairie Complex. R. J. L. Jones is a biologist in Essex County.*

*Photo (on page 1) – “September Tallgrass Prairie” taken at Kenesserie Tallgrass Prairie, Chatham-Kent. All rights reserved.*



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**In the three-year period ending in 2015 we provided hands-on maintenance on 43 privately-owned grassland sites in Southern Ontario. In 2018 Tallgrass Ontario has 4 projects in progress focusing on maintaining existing grassland in a healthy state, protecting rare plants such as *Bird's foot violet* and *Slender bush clover* and enhancing habitat for pollinating insects including Monarch butterflies.**

Please consider donating to Tallgrass Ontario. Your donation will support:

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- ❖ Production of information booklets supplied for events and meetings to educate the public about the rarity of these ecosystems and the steps required to protect them,
- ❖ Boots-on-the-ground maintenance to ensure grasslands and savannahs remain healthy. This work includes prescribed burning, invasive species removal, control of competing native vegetation, enlargement of remnant tallgrass areas, mowing of sites where prescribed burning is not possible and other management activities.

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Steve Rankin  
President, Tallgrass Ontario



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5. Promote research and knowledge transfer of tallgrass communities

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