



**Confirmation of the Southwestern 'Yellow Form' and the
Typical 'Green Form' of the Eastern Ringtail
(*Erpetogomphus designatus* Hagen in Selys 1858)
in Doña Ana County
James Von Loh, Las Cruces
September 2025**

Addendum 1 to the 2nd Edition of *The Odonata of Doña Ana
County and the Black Range - Volume 1: The Dragonflies*

The Eastern Ringtail is covered in pages 34-37 of the 2nd Edition of *The Odonata of Doña Ana County and the Black Range - Volume 1: The Dragonflies*.

In this addendum, James Von Loh reports on his efforts to continue the documentation of this species in Doña Ana County and in particular the southwestern 'yellow form' of the species – all of this during the 2025 season.

Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West (Dennis Paulson, 2009, Princeton University Press) is a primary reference source used in this survey of the dragonflies and damselflies of Doña Ana County, New Mexico and adjacent areas. It is referred to here as "Paulson (2009)".

– R. A. Barnes, Editor

Confirmation of the Southwestern 'Yellow Form' and the Typical 'Green Form' of the Eastern Ringtail (*Erpetogomphus designatus* Hagen in Selys 1858) in Doña Ana County Reporting by James Von Loh

It's been interesting to observe several Eastern Ringtails (*Erpetogomphus designatus*) along the Leasburg Dam portion of the Rio Grande during September 2025. Officially I've photo-documented examples of the typical green-colored form (male and female) and have also photo-documented the southwestern yellow-colored form (male and female) using the same habitats as the greens. I have yet to document mating or egg-deposition behaviors of either color type.

J. N. Stuart photo-documented the first record (08/02/2013) of Eastern Ringtail (a green form male) in this area, as follows: "Rio Grande, Percha Dam State Park, below the dam, Sierra Co., NM. This rather far-to-the-west location is supported by one or more other earlier records of the species from the same general area of Sierra County. *Erpetogomphus compositus* also occurs here in sympatry." (iNaturalist). Other observations in Sierra County have occurred as recently as [05 October 2025](#).

Gordon Berman photo-documented a yellow form male Eastern Ringtail in Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park on 11 July 2020, a first for Doña Ana County. It was not until 12 August 2024 that I added a second Doña Ana County observation to the record, from near Mesilla. Generally, we have described them using Paulson's (2009) description as a southwestern form that lacks basal wingspots, is generally paler in color, has duller markings, and has a more yellowish club.

On September 12, 2025, I visited Leasburg Dam State Park near Radium Springs; it was windy so I concentrated photo-documenting a small population of White-belted Ringtails (*Erpetogomphus compositus*) that were mostly perching low on an exposed sandbar and also on the ground within the large picnic area; a few were mating and I was hoping to acquire some images of them in a mating wheel. I did collect a series of images of mating White-belted Ringtails along Mogollon Trail, but more importantly I noticed two individuals that looked/acted different, e.g., more greenish in color and much more skittish when approached.

On September 12, I was able to collect images of enough quality to provide positive identifications of both as Eastern Ringtails, the form which occurs from southeastern New Mexico and adjacent Texas to the east coast (Maryland to Florida) and south into Mexico (Durango and Nuevo Leon). Neither individual would allow me to approach as close as I would like nor would they perch for an extensive series of images. Luckily one was a female and the other a male, so a complete range of traits can be assessed and discussed. For both, variation from Paulson's (2009) description occurred in face color (white/whitish-yellow versus pale greenish). At that time, I could not distinguish a described facial feature of "two faintly indicated light brown stripes across front".

I had better luck approaching the green male individuals on 22 September and 29 September than I did earlier in the month. At this time I was also able to document the yellow form discussed here. All of the photographs in this addendum were taken at Leasburg Dam.

Take care, Gordon Berman and I are seeing diamondbacks near water of any kind regularly now - including a large one at Leasburg on September 29.

Paulson (2009) described the typical male Eastern Ringtail face and thorax as: Eyes light blue; Face pale greenish (ours is whitish-yellow) with two faintly indicated light brown stripes across front; Thorax dull light green with narrow but well developed stripes T1-T4; T1 incomplete at both ends; and Wings with well-defined brown spots at base.

To establish a baseline for the discussion of the yellow form, I have first included photographs of the green form.

1. Male green form. Abdomen with S1-S6 mostly black with pale yellow to off-white basal ring and yellow dorsal stripe on each segment; S7 similar but with more orange; S8-S10 entirely orange or with S8-S9 with much brown or black above (Paulson 2009). 12 September 2025
- 2-5. Male green form. 22 September 2025.
6. Female green form showing the face and eyes (and a pair of faint brown lines on her postclypeus). 22 September.
7. Male southwestern yellow form, frontal view showing face and eyes (brown eye color may be indicative of an immature individual). This photograph shows the distinct pair of brown lines on his postclypeus. 22 September 2025.
8. Female Eastern Ringtail perched on a rough pebble of the picnic area displays her dorso-lateral features, patterns, and colors; skittish, she only allowed four images to be collected by me on 12 September 2025.
9. Paulson (2009) described the typical female Eastern Ringtail abdomen: "Yellow more extensive on top of abdomen, black markings are more reduced than are the male's." 12 September 2025.
10. Green male with light green face and faintly distinguishable lines, bluish-gray eyes, dull and light green thorax with narrow but well-developed stripes (T1-T4, T1 is incomplete at both ends), wing bases each with a small brown spot. 29 September 2025.
11. Mature male southwestern yellow form with a faint brown line on his postclypeus, light bluish-gray eyes, (continued on page 4)



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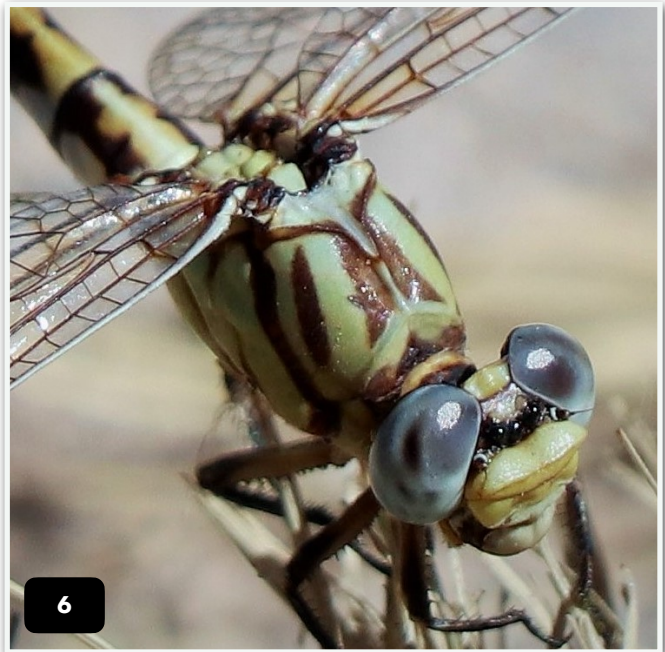
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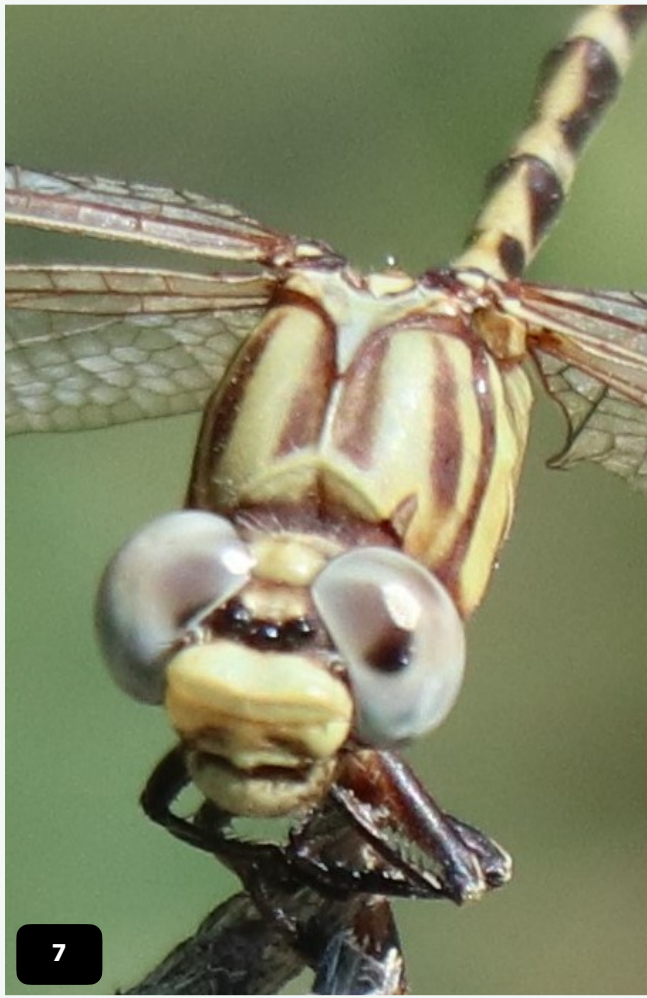
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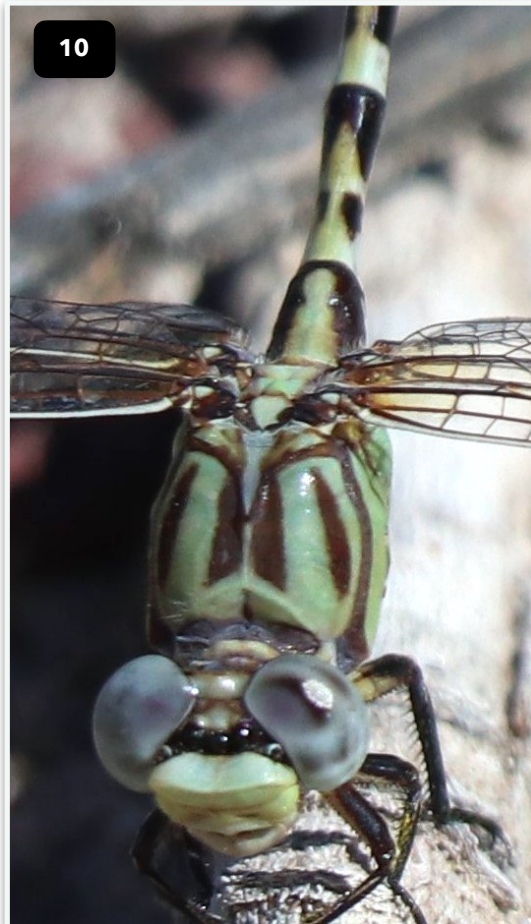
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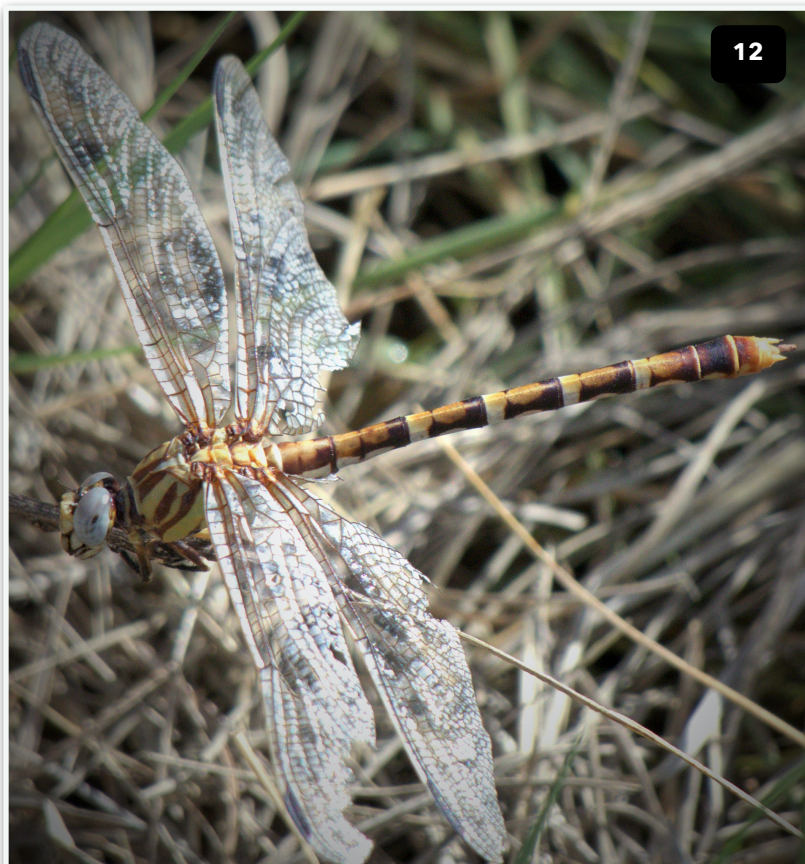
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11. (continued from page 2) yellow face, thorax yellow with narrow but well-developed stripes (T1 incomplete at both ends). 29 September 2025.

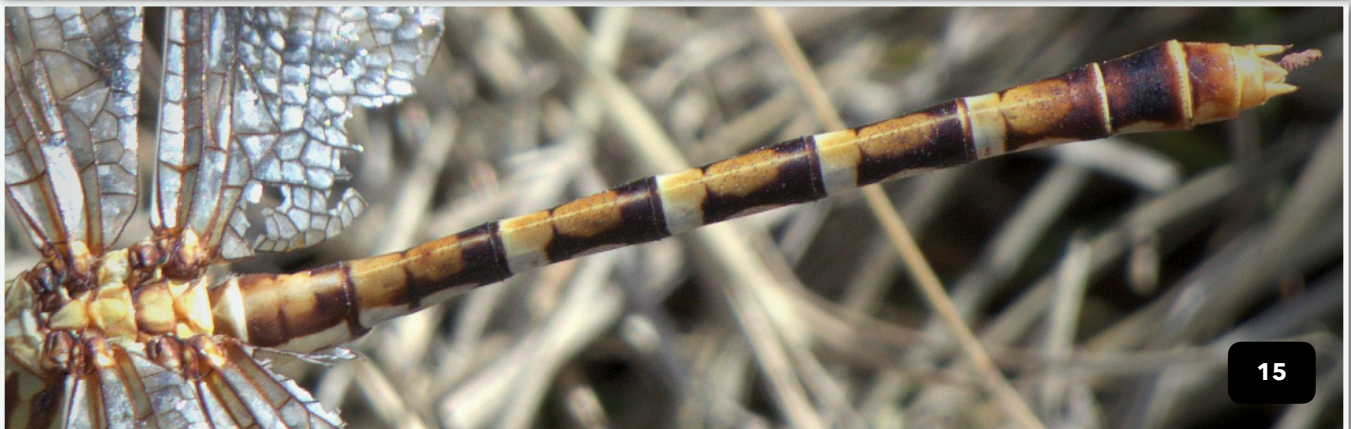
12. Southwestern yellow female perches low on mown Bermuda grass, note her brown basal wing spot, generally she is colored much like the male but the yellow-orange is much more extensive on top the abdomen; and black markings are reduced. Note the wing-wear she has encountered to date. 29 September 2025.



13. Frontal view of a female southwestern yellow form face, eyes, and thorax (including the brown wing bases) showing the faint pair of brown lines on her postclypeus. 29 September 2025.

14. Southwestern yellow male perches on dried flowers, note his brown basal wing spot, light blue eyes, pale yellowish face, bright yellow thorax with narrow but

well developed stripes (T1-T4, T1 incomplete at both ends), abdomen with S1-S6 mostly black with white basal ring and yellow dorsal stripe on each segment, S7 similar but with more orange, S8-S10 entirely brownish-orange. 22 September 2025.



15. Southwestern yellow female abdomen, when compared to the male, does not have a pronounced club, and the yellowish-orange dorsal color is much more extensive (also partially covering the rings). Note she is excreting feces. 29 September 2025.

Perching Behavior

Gordon Berman reports that "The yellow form ringtail I photographed on 7/11/20 kept its position on, or returned to, the same terminal dead branch (or one no more than a few feet away) after brief flights (perhaps spooked by my proximity) for at least 18 minutes. On my return trip almost one hour later, it was on the same perch. I watched it for another 4 minutes before heading out of the park. I know

it's not unusual for dragonflies to return to the same perch, but the duration in this instance struck me as curious, certainly fortuitous for my benefit. During the course of 55 or so photos the dragonfly used two perches which were roughly 2 to 2.5 meters off the ground."

During my 2024 observations near Mesilla Park the dragonfly was using a slightly higher perch, about 3 to 3.5 meters off the ground.

The dragonflies at Leasburg in September were mostly perching on the sand/gravel surface or on low perches up to 1 meter high (fence rail). The females perch low but almost always on tops of grass mats mown and unmown.