

Needham's Skimmer (*Libellula needhami*)

Pennsylvania Dragonfly Species of Concern

State Rank: SH (Historic), proposed S1 (Critically Imperiled) Global Rank: G5 (Secure)

Identification

A coastal species common to the brackish backwaters and marshes along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastline, Needham's skimmer (*Libellula needhami*) has only recently been re-documented in the Commonwealth after a 50-year absence. A beautiful dragonfly with a 2-inches long golden-red body, this species is easily confused with several similar species. Two diagnostic characteristics are the brown vein on the inner leading edge of the wings and brown tibia on hind legs in contrast to the golden-winged skimmer (*Libellula auripennis*) which has entirely orange-yellow wing veins and black tibia on the hind legs. Both species are considered critically imperiled (S1) in Pennsylvania.

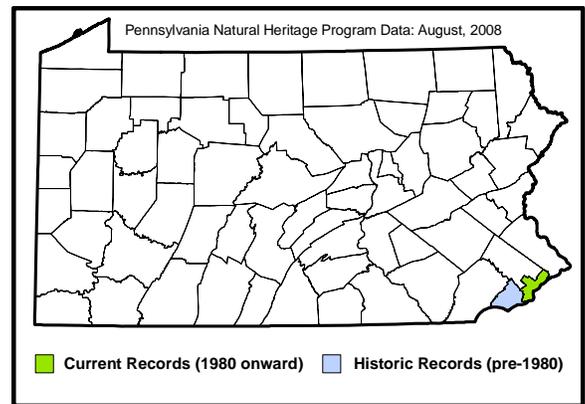
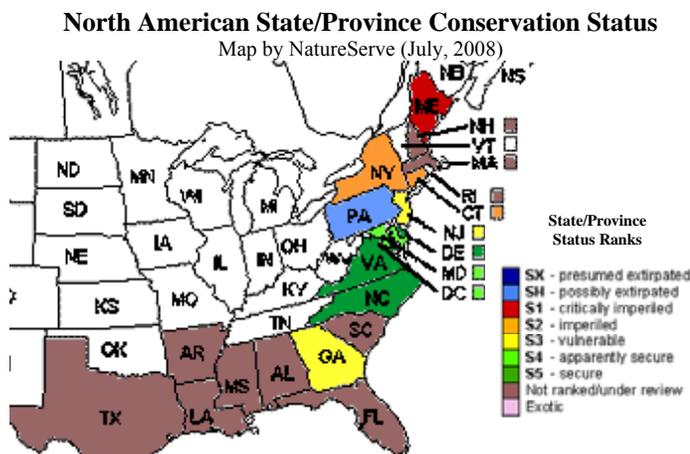
Range

Found near coastal saltwater and brackish marshlands along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico shoreline from Texas north to Maine.



photo source: Andrew Strassman, PNHP

Needham's Skimmer (*Libellula needhami*)



Habitat

Brackish marshlands, channels, backwaters, ponds, and eutrophied coastal farm ponds on occasion.

Conservation Status

Preservation of this species in the Commonwealth will require the protection and restoration of the few areas of remaining tidal marsh along the Delaware River. Like many odonates (dragonflies and damselflies), this species requires very different habitats throughout its life cycle. If any of these habitats are missing, not connected, or very degraded, the species will be lost from the system. As a nymph this species requires healthy aquatic system in which to hunt, grow, and find shelter from predators.

References

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- Nikula, B., Loose, J.L., and M.R. Burne. A Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Massachusetts. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife; Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 2003.
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2008.

