

EASTERN RINGTAIL

Erpetogomphus designatus

Order: Odonata
Family: Gomphidae
FNAI Ranks: G5/S1
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none



Description: 49-55 mm (2.0-2.2 in.) long. Clear wings with amber spots near the base, a yellow leading edge, and a black spot (stigma) along the leading edge near the wingtip (Beaton 2007). Two brown lateral stripes on the thorax, the anterior stripe usually being incomplete. Eyes blue or gray. Males have a green thorax, and a slender abdomen completely encircled with black rings that ends in a widened, reddish club tip. Females have a yellow-green thorax, a thicker abdomen with a yellow dorsal stripe that interrupts the black rings, and lack a widened club tip.

Similar Species: Most similar to flag-tailed spinyleg (*Dromogomphus spoliatus*) which is larger (56-65 mm), has much longer back legs that are uniformly black (bicolored in eastern ringtail), and a larger club at the end of the tail (Beaton 2007). Flag-tailed spinyleg has a similar range-wide distribution but is not known to occur in Florida.

Habitat: Rivers and streams with gravel bottoms (Beaton 2007). In Florida, only known to be associated with the Apalachicola River and its tributaries.

Seasonal Occurrence: Adults are active from late May into mid-October (Dunkle 1992, Beaton 2007).

Florida Distribution: Historically, it was found in both Gadsden and Liberty County along the Apalachicola River. Currently only known from Liberty County near the Apalachicola River in Torreya State Park, Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve, and Apalachicola National Forest.

Range-wide Distribution: From as far north as Montana extending southwest into Mexico and eastward to the Atlantic Coast as far north as Maryland (Abbott 2016).

Conservation Status: Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Florida. Both

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known occurrences are on protected managed areas. However, this species has declined in the state since the opening of Jim Woodruff Dam in 1957 (Dunkle 1992).

Protection and Management: Restore natural hydrology to the Apalachicola-Flint-Chattahoochee River watershed. No additional dams should be built in rivers in which this species is known to occur. Dredging and pollution of such rivers must be minimized.

References: Abbott 2016, Beaton 2007, Dunkle 1992.



Male. © Robert Gundy

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