ELFIN SKIMMER
Nannothemis bella

Order: Odonata
Family: Libellulidae
FNAI Ranks: G4G5/S2
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none

Description: The smallest dragonfly in the U.S. (18-20 mm = 0.7-0.78 in.). Males have a white face and blue-gray eyes with a reddish-brown stripe at the back of each eye. The thorax and abdomen are entirely blue-gray. The anterior half of the abodmen often with suffuse black, segments S7-S9 often appear paler, and S10 black. Wings have dark stigmas, sometimes with white borders. Females have a white face and eyes that are mostly reddish and whitish lower section. The thorax has black stripes over a yellow base color. The abdomen has yellow dorsal markings that become smaller going toward the tip, often absent on S7, but always present S8 and S9. Wings with suffuse orange near the base and dark stigmas often with white borders.

Similar Species: Little blue dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax miniscula*) is larger (25-27 mm or about 1 inch). Male little blue dragonlets have an abdomen with segments S8-S10 conspicuously black and a metallic blue face. Female little blue dragonlets have an abdomen with a black dorsal stripe and yellow rectangles along the side as well as a yellowish or tan face.

Habitat: Sphagnum bogs that are typically associated with seepage streams.

Seasonal Occurrence: Flight season is March - July.

Florida Distribution: From Calhoun County west to the Alabama border.

Range-wide Distribution: From the Florida panhandle west to Louisiana and north to Canada.

Conservation Status: Known from at least two conservation areas: Blackwater River State Forest and Eglin Air Force Base.

Protection and Management: Generally, manage for healthy *Sphagnum* bogs within its range. Avoid clearcutting up to the edge of seepage streams and bogs. Allow fire to naturally extinguish along seepage streams and bogs to reduce overcrowding of woody vegetation. Avoid any activities that would change the hydrology of bogs.

References: Paulson 2011

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