

BOGDIVERSITY THURSDAY



—*from Head Naturalist Clinton*

Ladybugs

POST #38—July 21, 2022

With today's Bogdiversity Thursday post, we will be passing 100 species profiled during this series! If you do the math, this works out to a mere 2.8% of all of the biodiversity documented in the Sax-Zim Bog to date. It seems fitting to reach this milestone with a group of species that are well known, but maybe not for the right reasons: Ladybugs!

When most of us think of ladybugs, there are likely one of two reactions: First, you might recoil at the thought (or smell) of ladybugs in your house, especially in the fall. These are almost certainly the non-native Multicolored Ladybug. Your other reaction might be, "Gosh, I haven't seen a ladybug in a while." This is the case if you think about native ladybug species, which as a whole, have been in sharp declines for a number of years.

In the Sax-Zim Bog, we have documented 15 native species of ladybug, with 3 non-native species documented. Of the 15 native species documented, there are a number of fairly rare or uncommon species that call the Sax-Zim Bog home.

Ladybugs are excellent predators of aphids, as adults and as nymphs. Some ladybugs are even more specialized feeders, preferring molds that grow on the surface of plant leaves. Interestingly enough, not all ladybugs are found at ground level! There are a few species that are seldom seen because they prefer the tree tops.

A colorful group, ladybugs have a wide variety of shapes and colors. Some ladybugs are nearly round, where others are more of an oval shape. To identify ladybugs, it is important to take a look at their elytra (wing covers), their heads, and their body shape. The colors, patterns, and numbers of spots all are important to ID one species from the next.

We hope you have enjoyed the first 100 plus species featured in our posts! Below are notes on a few of the ladybug species found in the Sax-Zim Bog.

(Photos below of ladybugs by Head Naturalist Clinton)



Three-banded Ladybug is perhaps one of the most exciting species found in the Sax-Zim Bog. They were one of the first rare species we documented and they just so happen to be wetland obligate species. This means that if you are in a wetland, you might be able to find this species. Without wetlands, this species is absent from an area.



American Eye-spot Ladybug is a handsome beetle! This species is part of the Giant Ladybug genus *Anatis* and is noticeably larger than many native ladybug species. Its name comes from the white-outlined dots on its wing covers and it can be quite variable in color. This species of ladybug is largely arboreal and prefers the canopy of forests.



Marsh Ladybug is another wetland species of ladybug, that is quite different from most species. Most ladybugs are orangish or reddish, but not typically yellow. In our area, Marsh and 20-spotted Ladybug are both yellow species that like wetlands. Marsh Ladybug is interesting in that it seems to be somewhat abundant, but only in areas with lots of sedges.



The final ladybug is another fun odd-ball: Twice-stabbed Ladybug! This species is a striking black and red, diverging once again from the typical orangish coloration of ladybugs you might be familiar with. Somewhat common, this ladybug does what most ladybugs do well and that is eat aphids and mealybugs! Ladybugs are effective deterrents of vegetation pests and are right at home in gardens or in wilderness areas.