

# Ophiogomphus arizonicus (Arizona Snaketail)

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Cameron Eckert,

## Taxonomy

- **Class:** INSECTA
- **Order:** ODONATA
- **Family:** GOMPHIDAE
- **Genus:** Ophiogomphus
- **Scientific Name:** *Ophiogomphus arizonicus*  
Kennedy, 1917
- **Common Name:** Arizona Snaketail
- **Synonyms:**
- **Taxonomic Name Source:**

## Agency Status

- **NMDGF:**
- **Federal Status:**
- **BLM Sensitive:**
- **USFS:**
- **IUCN Red List:** [Least Concern](#)
- **Nature Serve Global:** [G2](#)
- **NHNM State:** S2
- **NM Endemic:** NO

## Description

This is a fairly large dragonfly. The thorax is lime green except for reduced black shoulder stripes. The abdomen is mostly dark with greenish-yellow lengthwise stripes along the dorsal surface. The larva is flat and brown with an oval abdomen. *Ophiogomphus arizonicus* is similar to *O. severus*, though it can be distinguished by the male epiproct, which is only half the length of the cerci in *O. arizonicus* and three quarters the length in *O. severus*. In addition, female *O. arizonicus* has a straight post-ocellar ridge on the vertex, while the ocellar ridge in *O. severus* is strongly undulate. Lastly the larva has higher dorsal abdominal spines than *O. severus* (HAZ 2024).

## Habitat and Ecology

The Arizona Snaketail prefers small, rocky, montane streams with moderately swift currents and open banks, and with silt at the stream margins for larval habitat. Suitable streams are typically found in pine woodlands (Paulson 2017, NatureServe 2024).

## Geographic Range:



This southwestern dragonfly species is found in the Mogollon Rim of Arizona and the Gila Mountains of southwestern New Mexico (Paulson 2017). A few dozen occurrences are currently known, within this relatively restricted range (NatureServe 2024).

## Conservation Considerations:

There are no conservation actions in place for this species. It does occur mostly in National Forests and Tribal Lands, where it may be protected from some though likely not all potential threats (Paulson 2017). Monitoring is needed to ensure this relatively range restricted species remains stable and habitat quality is not threatened.

## Threats:

Threats that destabilize stream flows, such as timber harvest, overgrazing, and forest fires likely disturb this species due to degradation of water quality. The larvae are vulnerable to changes in water quality and altered stream flows (NatureServe 2024).

## Population:

While this species may be locally common in suitable habitats (Paulson 2017) little is known about whether populations are abundant or stable, as the species is not monitored closely. It has been noted as “rare” and “local” but more research is needed (Bick 2003).

## References:

- Paulson, D.R.. 2017. *Ophiogomphus arizonicus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2017: e.T165011A80691348. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2017-3.RLTS.T165011A80691348.en>. Accessed on 07 November 2024
- Bick, G.H.. 2003. At-risk Odonata of conterminous United States. *Bulletin of American Odonatology* 7: (41-56).
- NatureServe. 2024. NatureServe. [https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT\\_GLOBAL.2.117587/Ophiogomphus\\_arizonicus](https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.117587/Ophiogomphus_arizonicus). Accessed on 11/7/2024
- Hike Arizona (HAZ). 2024. Arizona Snaketail Dragonfly. <https://hikearizona.com/dexcoder.php?PID=799>. Accessed on 7 November 2024

## More Information