

# 2026 Addendum

## Expanded Female *Photuris frontalis* Observations

Southeast Louisiana and Congaree National Park

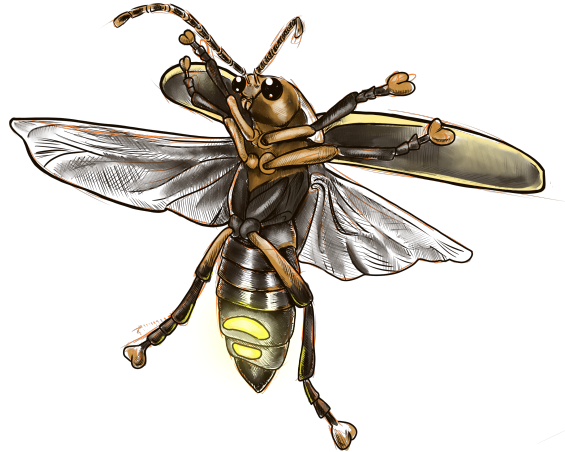


Illustration: Female *Photuris frontalis* in Flight

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Southeast Louisiana/Congaree National Park  
2026 Season

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# Purpose of this Addendum

This addendum supplements the completed 2023–2025 report on female *Photuris frontalis* observations. Rather than revising the original report immediately, I have preserved it as a dated record and added the 2026 observations separately here.

The 2026 season expanded the original field record in several important ways. Continued observations from my home property in Southeast Louisiana produced additional confirmed female encounters, including low-flying and faint-flashing females near leaf litter, grass, driveway edges, and underbrush margins. I also made exploratory observations along the Tammany Trace in Abita Springs and recorded field notes from Congaree National Park while observing with members of Orit Peleg’s research team.

These findings are based on direct observation, including live captures, field photography, video documentation, and contemporaneous field notes. High-resolution photographs and video documentation of female *Photuris frontalis* — including rare footage of flash-flying behavior — are available upon request. While in-flight clarity varies, the recordings support the behavioral and positional observations discussed in this addendum.

This document should be read as a supplementary field record rather than a final analysis. Some interpretations remain preliminary and may be revised as observations are reviewed, mapped, compared, or incorporated into a formal 2023–2026 revision.

## Study Area & Timeframe

Observations primarily took place on private property in Southeast Louisiana during the 2026 *Photuris frontalis* activity season, especially from April through May. My primary observation zone includes wooded edges, leaf litter, underbrush, driveway margins, and the transition zones between those features and the grass-covered yard near my home, where *P. frontalis* activity is regularly observed.

In 2026, I expanded my observations beyond the home property to include exploratory field observations along the Tammany Trace in Abita Springs, Louisiana, and field observations at Congaree National Park in South Carolina with members of the Peleg Lab team.

## Section 1 — Home Property Observations

During the 2026 season, four additional confirmed female *Photuris frontalis* were documented at my Southeast Louisiana home property. These encounters continued several patterns described in the 2023–2025 report: females were low, difficult to detect, often faint-flashing, and closely associated with leaf litter, grass, driveway edges, and underbrush margins.

The first confirmed female of the season, Lenore, was found on April 27, 2026, flying approximately 3–4 inches above the ground near leaf litter on the north side of the driveway. Her flash pattern resembled the male “snap-snap-snap” pattern, but her position, behavior, and later confirmation showed that she was female. She reacted strongly to capture and flashed erratically afterward.

A second confirmed female, Countess, was found on April 28, 2026, in the southwest corner of the yard near a cypress tree. She was perched low on vegetation near the transition between grass and underbrush, approximately 1.5 to 2 feet above the ground. Her flashing was faint, and she later moved into the leaf litter after release.

A third confirmed female, PookyLoo, was found on April 29, 2026, flying approximately 12 inches above the ground near leaf litter on the north side of the driveway, near the area where Lenore had been found. Weather conditions were windy and stormy, and many fireflies were flashing strangely that evening, which made field interpretation more difficult. She was retained for observation and later released.

A fourth confirmed female, Lynn, was found on May 3, 2026, in leaf litter and grass near the southwest side of the driveway, close to the transition between underbrush and the grassy yard. Her flashes included a series of double flashes and single flashes. She was kept briefly for observation with a male and released on May 5, when she flew up into the trees while flashing faintly.

Taken together, these 2026 home-property observations strengthen the earlier pattern: female *P. frontalis* are most often detected low to the ground and near habitat edges. Several were not stationary when found. They were flying, moving, or flashing faintly in locations where they could easily have been overlooked.

## **Section 2 — Tammany Trace Observations**

In 2026, I also made exploratory observations along the Tammany Trace in Abita Springs, Louisiana. This site appeared to support substantial *Photuris frontalis* activity. On May 6, I observed hundreds of Snappies around the trail area, along with possible faint female activity close to the ground.

The suspected females at Tammany Trace were not confirmed by capture, so these observations should be treated cautiously. However, the behavior was consistent with patterns seen at my home property: faint flashes among the males, low flight, and activity near edge habitat. These observations suggest the site may be useful for future female-focused fieldwork, especially if access and observation timing can be coordinated during peak male activity.

Because no female *P. frontalis* was confirmed at Tammany Trace during this observation period, this section should be read as exploratory site documentation rather than confirmed female data.

## **Section 3 — Congaree National Park Field Notes**

From May 8–15, 2026, I observed *Photuris frontalis* activity at Congaree National Park in South Carolina while working alongside members of Orit Peleg’s research team. Most observations took place at Sims Trail after initial scouting at Bannister Bridge.

Congaree differed from my home property in scale, darkness, terrain, and density of male activity. Males were observed in increasing numbers over several nights, but confirmed females remained difficult to locate. As in Louisiana, many false leads occurred. Some males perched low or flashed strangely in the leaf litter, and at least one femme fatale was found in the same general activity zone, complicating field interpretation.

On May 14, 2026, approximately 10–15 minutes after male flashing began, I found a copulating pair of *Photuris frontalis* on a sliver of pine bark in the leaf litter several feet into the woods from Sims Trail. The pair separated during handling, but the female was confirmed and photographed by the research team. She was then placed into an observation setup with cameras and active males.

This Congaree encounter was significant because it confirmed a female *P. frontalis* in a research-site context during active male display conditions. It also reinforced the larger detection problem: females may be present but remain nearly invisible unless their own faint flashes, male attention, or copulation reveals them.

Because I did not know the true first male emergence date at Congaree, these observations cannot be used to calculate a reliable male-to-female seasonal lag for that population. They do, however, support the broader conclusion that female detection is difficult even when males are visible and abundant.

#### **Section 4 — Emerging Patterns / Preliminary Thoughts**

The 2026 observations strengthened several patterns already noted in the 2023–2025 report.

First, confirmed females continued to appear low to the ground. Some were in leaf litter or grass, while others were perched on low vegetation or flying only a few inches to about a foot above the ground. This low positioning remains one of the most important practical clues for finding them.

Second, edge habitat continued to matter. Confirmed females were repeatedly found near driveway margins, underbrush edges, grassy transitions, pine straw, leaf litter, and other boundary zones where open space meets heavier vegetation. These may be preferred female locations, productive male-search zones, or simply areas where faint female flashes are easier to detect.

Third, female flash behavior remained varied. Some females flashed faintly and erratically. Some gave double flashes or mixed single and double flashes. Some appeared to flash in ways that could be confused with male behavior. This makes field confirmation difficult and helps explain why females may be under-documented.

Fourth, female mobility appears important. Several 2026 females were found flying or later flew during release. This supports the idea that female *P. frontalis* are not simply stationary lights waiting in the leaf litter. They may move, fly, hide, reject males, respond selectively, and change behavior depending on weather, male activity, disturbance, or receptivity.

Fifth, the male-first pattern remains worth investigating. Across four Louisiana seasons, confirmed female encounters followed first confirmed or strongly established male activity by approximately 8–14 days. This may reflect true emergence protandry, delayed female receptivity, delayed detectability, or some combination of these factors. The 2026 season strengthened the pattern, but it does not prove the mechanism.

Overall, the 2026 observations did not replace the original 2023–2025 report. They expanded it. The same core pattern remains: female *Photuris frontalis* are present, active, flashing, mobile, and behaviorally varied, but they are extremely easy to miss unless observers watch low, watch edges, and treat faint or unusual flashes as worth investigating.

A related pattern worth noting is the repeated gap between first confirmed male activity and first confirmed female detection. Across four Louisiana seasons, confirmed female encounters have followed first confirmed or strongly established male activity by approximately 8–14 days. This may suggest protandry, meaning males may mature or become active before females. However, the pattern could also reflect delayed female receptivity, delayed female detectability, or some combination of these factors.

Because female *P. frontalis* are faint-flashing, low to the ground, and difficult to confirm without capture or close observation, absence of confirmed females during early male activity should not be treated as proof that females are absent. At this stage, the most cautious interpretation is that males become visible and detectable before females are reliably found. The biological cause of that lag remains unresolved.

### **Supporting Materials**

Detailed confirmed and suspected female records, mapped locations, and photo/video references are maintained separately in the Female *Photuris frontalis* Capture & Observation Ledger and related 2026 field logs. These materials are available upon request and may be incorporated into a future formal 2023–2026 revision.