

NEW BREEDING SITE OF *TRITHEMIS ANNULATA* (P. DE BEAUV.) IN CORSICA (ANISOPTERA: LIBELLULIDAE)

*T. annulata* is an African species that breeds in some places in southern mediterranean Europe (Crete and the Peloponnes in Greece, Sicily, Sardinia and the southern half of the Italian peninsula as well as the lowland parts of the Iberian peninsula; R.R. ASKEW, 1988, *Dragonflies of Europe*, Harley, England). In France it was not known until 1988, when B.A. ROCHE (1989, *Martinia* 5: 23-24) found three males at a reservoir near Aléria, Corsica. J.-L. DOMMANGET (1994, *Atlas préliminaire des odonates de France*. Mus. Natn. Hist. Nat., Paris) has two dots in this species' distribution map in Corsica, one presumably being the Aléria site and the other, on the NW coast.

It is therefore interesting to note that on 28 August 1996 we found an important number of *T. annulata* at the NE end of the reservoir of the vil-

lage of Figari, 9 km N of Bonifacio (Département Corse du Sud, France). Along a 60 m stretch of a gravel path there were ca 30 imagines of the species (20 ♂, 10 ♀). Among other odonate species, only 2 male *Orthetrum cancellatum* were seen. The reservoir is a reproduction site, because we found ca 70 exuviae along a section of the shore which measured 40 m long by 13 m wide. According to the key in ASKEW (1988, loc. cit.), all of 36 collected exuviae were identified as *T. annulata*. As the entire reservoir is about 3 km long, and this section of shore seemed to be typical of the rest of the shore, the total number of emerged imagines at the lake may well go into tens of thousands. The reservoir seems to be quite newly built. It is rather oligotrophic and totally surrounded with maquis forest on a granitic basement. The open shore was 10-20 m wide, measured from the waterfront to the beginning of the closed terrestrial vegetation, and sparsely covered with mostly dead 10-80 cm high bushes and some *Juncus*.

The exuviae were found mostly clinging to the topmost twigs of very small bushes on reeds (*Juncus* sp.), on rocks, fallen tree logs as well as on our tent. They were between 10 and 30 cm high up, the highest 80 cm above the ground. They emerged mostly between 3 and 8 m from the waterfront, at most ca 13 m from it. Some exuviae were also found on twigs of small drowned bushes standing in the water. Many of the dragonflies must have emerged recently and most of them probably during the night and before 8 h a.m. in the morning. During the night of 27/28 August three larvae used our tent to emerge. Only one freshly emerged larva was seen at 9 h a.m. At 2 h a.m. there was a newly emerged adult in the tent. Adult behaviour was very similar to some *Sympetrum* species, e.g. *S. fonscolombi*: twig-topping, obelisque position with drooped wings and still hunting from the wind-sheltered side of small bushes along a gravel track.

This seems to be the first case of proven breeding of *T. annulata* in France. In fact this may not seem very astonishing in view of the species' distribution in the region. Sardinia, for instance, where *T. annulata* has been known to occur, is separated from Corsica by an isthmus only about 15 km wide. Nevertheless, given the relative paucity of reservoirs in Corsica, and the size of the reservoir at Figari, this may well turn out to be one of the most

important breeding sites on the "Island of Beauty".

One may speculate about whether *T. annulata* has always bred in Corsica and was just overlooked or whether it has recently colonised the isle. D. GRAND (1994, *Martinia* 10(4): 65-71) describes the species' significant range expansion in Spain during the last 20 years and the first observation of both a few males and females in mainland France near Perpignan, Dép. Pyrénées-Orientales. Therefore Corsica may have been colonised only recently. In any case, dragonfly-fanciers spending their holidays in Corsica had better watch out for this very attractive species, because there are nevertheless a few interesting reservoirs in the south, along the east coast and in the NW of the isle.

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