

SOME FIELD OBSERVATIONS ON ODONATE PREDATION BY SPIDERS

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Abstract – Predation of *Pseudagrion microcephalum* (Ramb.) and *Coenagrion dyeri* Fras. by the spiders *Tetragnatha fletcheri* Gravely and *Zygoballus pashanensis* Tikader and *Marpisa* sp. respectively is described. 8 other odon. spp. are recorded from spiders' webs.

Observations

Odonate predation by spiders is commonly observed and reported (cf. KUMAR & PRASAD, 1977, with references; HASSAN, 1977). Some further observations on odonate predation by spiders are recorded here.

While making routine observations and collection of Odonata in the vicinity of Santragachi, Howrah, West Bengal, India, one of us (R.R.) has come across some cases of damselfly predation by spiders. On December 5, 1976, a male of *Pseudagrion microcephalum* (Rambur) (Coenagrionidae) was

found just entangled in the web of *Tetragnatha fletcheri* Gravely (Araneida: Tetragnathidae). After a few minute's watch the spider made its first attempt to catch the prey. The damselfly immediately started violent fluttering, so that the spider retreated. After about ten minutes the spider made a new approach and was able to catch the prey, which still exhibited some movement but was overpowered by the spider and finally immobilized. The whole operation took 1 h 5 min.

Predation of freshly emerged *Coenagrion dyeri* Fraser (Coenagrionidae) by the jumping spiders, *Zygoballus pashanensis* Tikader and *Marpisa* sp. (Araneida: Salticidae), was observed in the early morning of December 5 and 8, 1976, on bushes and aquatic vegetation at the bank of a permanent water body at the same locality. The jumping spiders first caught the prey's head, then the

Table I – Dragonfly predation by spiders

Data	Name of species	Locality No. & condition of species
25-VII-77	<i>Agriocnemis pygmaea</i> (Ramb.)	1; – just entangled
15-VIII-77	<i>A. pygmaea</i>	1; – just entangled
25-VII-77	<i>Ceriagrion coromandelianum</i> (Fabr.)	1; – teneral fluttering in web
12-XI-77	<i>Ischnura senegalensis</i> (Ramb.)	1; – undamaged specimen
5-XII-76	<i>Pseudagrion</i> sp.	2; – entangled in web, able to escape after successful struggle
4-II-77	<i>P. decorum</i> (Ramb.)	2; – undamaged specimen from house spider web
22-XII-77	<i>P. decorum</i>	1; – undamaged specimen
24-XII-77	<i>P. decorum</i>	1; – fragments
5-XII-76	<i>P. microcephalum</i> (Ramb.)	2; – fragments
25-VII-77	<i>P. microcephalum</i>	1; – undamaged specimen
30-VII-77	<i>Brachythemis contaminata</i> (Fabr.)	1; – fluttering in web
5-IV-78	<i>Diplacodes trivialis</i> (Ramb.)	1; – fluttering in web
20-X-77	<i>Zyxomma petiolatum</i> (Ramb.)	3; – badly damaged

Locality Nos.: 1: Paikpara, Calcutta; – 2: Santragachi, Howrah (both West Bengal); – 3: Mahaso, Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh).

thorax, and started running up and down the branches until the prey had become immobilized. At close examination it was found that the thorax of these damselflies was damaged by the spiders.

Additional observations are listed in Table I.

References – HASSAN, A.T., 1977, *Odonatologica* 6: 1-5; – KUMAR, A. & M. PRASAD, 1977, *Odonatologica* 6: 19-20.

Received July 25, 1978