

PANTALA HYMENAEA (SAY) NEW TO BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, WITH NOTES ON ITS STATUS IN THE NORTH-WESTERN UNITED STATES (ANISOPTERA: LIBELLULIDAE)

On 23 July 1988 while in my garden at Ten-mile Point, Victoria, British Columbia, I observed a distinctive dragonfly that I immediately recognized as *Pantala hymenaea*. The dragonfly, hunting over the large lawn, flew past me eight or ten times between 13:10 and 13:15 PST, approaching as closely as two meters; I had good views of it at both eye level and from below. A *Pantala*, presumably the same insect, flew by the same place at 16:45 h PST the same day, and three times from 13:50 h to 13:52 h on 24 July. The site is open and south-facing on the shore of

Cadboro Bay; the Washington State mainland is visible, 30 km to the south across the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The brown body, orange face (indicating a male), and light brown spots on the expanded bases of the hindwings were clearly visible. The soaring, gliding flight was distinctive. Similar species, also often wide-ranging, were immediately eliminated as possibilities. The dark patches on the hindwings of northern species of *Tramea* are much larger than those observed; *T. lacerata* Hag., the only species of the genus recorded from Washington State, is black in colour. *Pantala flavescens* (Fabr.), famous for its cosmopolitan wanderings, and known as far north on the West Coast of North America as Inyo Co., California (D.R. PAULSON & R.W.

GARRISON, 1977, *Pan-Pacif. Ent.*, 53: 147-160), has no hindwing spots and is much paler.

P. hymenaea ranges transcontinentally in the southern United States, south to Cuba and Chili. In Canada it is occasional in southern Ontario and very rare in southern Manitoba, Quebec, and New Brunswick (E.M. WALKER & P.S. CORBET, 1975, *The Odonata of Canada and Alaska*, Vol. 3, Univ. Toronto Press, Toronto). In the West, *P. hymenaea* is abundant in parts of California and is known from Oregon and Washington, where it probably breeds, although there is no definite evidence (D.R. Paulson, pers. comm.). Specimen records from eastern Washington are from 12 July and 16 August 1971 (PAULSON & GARRISON, 1977, cf. above). Sightings recorded by Paulson (*in litt.*) from western Washington range from 3 July to 3 September as follows: Snohomish Co., slough 1 mile E of Cathcart, 10 August 1971 (PAULSON & GARRISON, 1977, cf. above); Grays Harbor Co., Point Brown, near Ocean Shores, 31 August 1979 (feeding in lee of small sand dune at base of jetty); Grays Harbor Co., Point Damon, near Ocean Shores, 3 September 1979 (flew past tip of spit, strong S wind); Pierce Co., Tacoma, 3 July 1983 (flying over grassy hill in Point Defiance Park, moderate SW wind); King Co., Seattle, 31 July 1983 (briefly over small pond in open grassy area); Grays Harbor Co., Ocean Shores, 1 and 2 September 1984. All these sightings were in open areas, more often not at water, and all were near the coast except the Snohomish Co. record.

The species apparently has increased in the coastal states of the western U.S. with the intensive irrigation of much of the region (PAULSON & GARRISON, 1977); it readily breeds in temporary and artificial ponds and is an early colonizer of such habitats. The records noted above indicate that *P. hymenaea* visits Washington State in small numbers, perhaps each summer, although it is clearly quite rare (D.R. Paulson, pers. comm.); Paulson has spent many days at Ocean Shores during the summer without seeing any.

Despite the fact that no specimen was secured, I am confident of the identification and expect future observations of *P. hymenaea* in southern British Columbia. The sighting docu-

mented here was not a surprise; I have anticipated the event for some time, given the northern expansion of the species range. Victoria was a prime candidate for its first landfall in the province, especially since Paulson's coastal records are not too distant (Seattle is about 120 km SE of Victoria, Ocean Shores 180 km SW). Whether *P. hymenaea* will in time breed in British Columbia is a matter of speculation. If it does, its life history will probably be similar to that in extreme southern Ontario. There, apparently, there is no overwintering larval population; adults are thought to immigrate from the south in spring, and their progeny then migrate south soon after emerging in late summer (WALKER & CORBET, 1975, cf. above).

I thank DENNIS R. PAULSON for supplying Washington Sight records and for commenting on the manuscript.

R.A. Cannings, Biology Section, Royal British Columbia Museum, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4, Canada.