

this pond tasted as salty as sea water. By this pond some specimens of *Sympetrum* and *Aeshna mixta* were present. At about 3 p.m. a female of *S. striolatum* and one of *S. fonscolombei* and a tandem pair of the latter species began to oviposit in the pond. Oviposition was continued for several minutes.

As far as we know, there are no records of dragonfly pre-imaginal stages collected from sea water. Both dragonfly eggs and larvae develop in either still or running freshwater, sometimes in brackish water (P.S. CORBET, 1962, *A biology of dragonflies*, Witherby, London), where females usually oviposit. However, a variety of inadequate substrates, which probably reflect light in the same way as water does, thus attracting dragonflies (P.S. CORBET, 1962, *ibidem*), may occasionally release oviposition behaviour. Among these, oil surfaces, canvas, vinyl sheets, hot houses, car bodies and metalised roads are reported (e.g. C.H. KENNEDY, 1938, *Ohio J. Sci.* 38(6): 267-276; C. LONGFIELD, 1953, *Ent. mon. Mag.*, 89: 97; K. MÜLLER, 1937, *Trop. Nat.* 26: 95-98; H. STEINER, 1948, *Zool. Jb. Syst.* 18: 65-96; A. SVIHLA, 1975, *Tombo* 18: 26). In the literature, at least three *Sympetrum* species (*sanguineum*, *striolatum*, *danae*) are reported to perform such a misled oviposition (C. LONGFIELD, 1953, cf. above). Indeed, in our view, these substrates resemble a freshwater surface less closely than does the surface of the sea, but, on the other hand, the lack on the sea shore of landscape elements, as e.g. plants, that are commonly found near freshwater bodies, might explain why the sea is not generally used by dragonflies for oviposition.

AGAIN ON THE OVIPOSITION OF *SYMPETRUM* INTO SEA WATER (ANISOPTERA: LIBELLULIDAE)

C. UTZERI (1986, *Notul. odonatol.* 2: 113-114) reported on some *Sympetrum* dragonflies performing oviposition behaviour at the sea surface. The species were not identified. Since oviposition into salty water is apparently uncommon, we believe it worth being put on record again for *S. striolatum* and *S. fonscolombei*.

On October 12, 1989, in the islet of Asinara, north-west to Sardinia, a pond of sea water, which had been formed by a sea storm, persisted at about 30 m behind the shore of Cala di Arena in a depression of about 8x 1,5-2 m surrounded by rushes and tamarisks. The water in

The persistent oviposition behaviour by our females indicates that these were unable to assess the fitness of the substrate they were using for survival of eggs and larvae. However, a generalized response to light reflexes on one hand may lead to oviposition into inadequate substrates, and on the other allows exploitation of a great variety of water bodies. The very high dispersal rates of some *Sympetrum* species (e.g. N.K. MICHIELS, 1989, *Abstr. Pap. 10th Int. Symp. Odonatol.*, p. 24 and unpublished data), coupled with a low selectivity in responding to light-reflecting surfaces, identifies a little-spe-

cialized habitat selection strategy, which gives these species a high potential for both geographic and ecological colonization. The risk of a mistake, and the consequent egg loss, is accepted in exchange.

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