

**A NOTE ON THE BEHAVIOUR AND HABITAT OF A MALE *HYPOPETALIA PESTILENS* McLACHL. (ANISOPTERA: NEOPETALIIDAE)**

A small stream at Ralún in the province of Llanquihue, Chile was visited at 12.30, 13.00-14.20, 15.59, 16.27 and 16.33 hours on December 25th 1991. It was a sunny day, the first after a long period of rain. At 1328 a male *H. pestilens* appeared and patrolled the stream until 14.02. The following observations were made on the insect during

the 34 minutes it was present.

Throughout that time it flew up and down 5 m of stream between a plank bridge and the point downstream where the stream became overgrown with bushes. It flew about 0.3 m above the surface of the water. On eight occasions it extended its patrol by another 5 m upstream to where the stream emerged from the cover of bushes. The male *H. pestilens* flew with its abdomen bent slightly downwards as in *Anax imperator* Leach. During the time it was by water it never perched. Sometimes it appeared to feed, or attempt to feed on small flying insects; and twice it appeared to pick off prey which was perching on rushes growing at the edge of the stream. Twice it chased a passing aeshnid dragonfly vigorously, and once flew at a passing bird. I searched other streams and sheltered paths in the vicinity but did not see any other *H. pestilens*. The small size of the patrolled area and the short time it was occupied were noteworthy.

The stream where it occurred was clear and unpolluted, though pigs roamed in the area. In the stretch patrolled by the male *H. pestilens* the stream was flowing at a rate of ca 0.5 m per second. Its width varied from 2 to 3 m. Rushes grew on the edge of it and in two little bays off it. A submerged form of the same or different species occurred in a few places. Small and medium-sized stones covered most of the stream bottom. In a stream nearby, whose rate of flow was less, there was much more submerged rush.

As well as seeing the unidentified aeshnid species mentioned above, I caught specimens of *Gomphomacromia paradoxa* Br., *Antiagrion blanchardi* (Sel.) and *A. grinbergi* Jurzitza near the stream.

The locality of *H. pestilens* described above lay in a valley running down to the Bahia Ralún, an arm of the sea. It was only a few feet above sea-level. According to L.E. PEÑA (1954, *Boletín Jardín zool. Concepcion* 1: 22-23), the species normally occurs in wooded habitats between 600 and 800 m. The apparently unusual habitat of the insect described here may be explained by the fact that the summer of 1991 was an exceptionally wet one and the locality was at the southern limit of the known range of the species (G. JURZITZA, 1989, *Soc. int. odonatol. rapid Comm.* [Suppl.] 9: iv+32 pp.).

The habitat and behaviour of *H. pestilens* ap-

pear to differ greatly from that of the Tasmanian neopetaliid *Archipetalia auriculata* Tillyard. In December 1987 I observed this species by rivulets in open country near Cradle Mountain. It was much less active and spent much of the time by its breeding habitat perched on the ground.

For those searching for *H. pestilens*, it should be noted that the large red-brown spots on the wings are not very obvious when the insect is in flight. However, the small pale mark on the thorax is noticeable when the insect is seen at close quarters.

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