

**MACROMIA SPLENDENS (PICTET) IN PORTUGAL (ANISOPTERA: CORDULIIDAE)**

The Portuguese records for *M. splendens* comprise two specimens from the Coimbra area in central Portugal taken in the 1930's (cf. M.A. LIEFTINCK, 1965, *Tijdschr. Ent.* 108: 41-59, pl. 5 excl.). In early July 1995 D. Chelmick and P. Mitchell undertook a survey of primarily riparian habitats in the Coimbra district with the prime purpose of establishing the continuing existence of this species. Coimbra is situated on the River Mondego which is one of the principal rivers of Portugal.

Our first excursions took us to the Lagoa da Vela, a sandy bottomed shallow lake and to Soure on the river Arunca, which was one of the original *M. splendens* localities. At Lagoa da Vela the only notable species recorded was *Enallagma cyathigerum*, which is very local in Portugal.

The river Arunca at Soure is fairly typical of

lowland rivers on the Mondego floodplain in that its water supplies are heavily predated by local farmers. Many rivers disappear altogether whilst others have been diverted into large eutrophic lagoons suitable only for the most resistant dragonflies. The river Arunca survives better than some in that extensive stretches of water remain but the odonate fauna appears from our brief examination to be at best mediocre.

The Mondego river itself is tidal almost as far as Coimbra leaving the lowland streams with few Odonata. Upstream of the town the river suffers from varying water levels caused by the large Barragens (reservoirs) constructed for hydro-electric power. The Odonata fauna of these areas is very poor although the Barragens themselves are home to very strong populations of *Trithemis annulata*.

The river Ceira is a tributary of the Mondego which meets the main river just upstream of

Coimbra. It is unaffected by the Barragems on the Mondego and is very reminiscent of the lowland rivers of southern France with its sluggish flow and tangled scrubby banks. The authors carried out an extensive search in three localities along the river for adults and exuviae. The search proved worthwhile in that a total of four exuviae of *M. splendens* were found in two of the three localities together with (inter alia) *Boyeria irene*, *Gomphus graslini*, *Onychogomphus uncatus*, *Oxygastra curtisii*. The most spectacular sighting of an adult *M. splendens* was made by P. Mitchell who observed the species fly out of the trees, attack a male *Anax imperator*, knock it to the ground and then disappear. D. Chelmick subsequently found the hapless *A. imperator* which was dead and is now preserved for posterity.

A more extensive paper including the detailed results of this survey is currently being prepared.

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