

ON THE OVIPOSITION OF *AESHNA VIRIDIS*
EVERSM. (ANISOPTERA: AESHNIDAE)

It has been suggested (e.g. D. GLITZ et al., 1989, *NatSchutz LandschPfl. Hamburg* 26, p. 50) that an area of at least 5 m² of water soldiers (*Stratiotes aloides*) is a precondition to stimulate oviposition in females of *A. viridis*.

Observations made in the St. Jürgensland NE of Bremen, Germany, indicate that this statement might need reconsideration (H. FLIEDNER, 1995, *Hagenia* 9: 16-17). Originally fen-lands, this area near the river Wümme has been drained by numerous ditches and turned into pastures. Since 1980, *Stratiotes*, once common there, has almost completely disappeared, probably due to hypertrophia as well as to the frequent clearing of the ditches.

In 1994, two sites where *Stratiotes* could still be found, were visited. The first of these was a ditch of a maximum width of 2 m with two stretches (length 30 and 10 m respectively) densely covered by *Stratiotes*, separated by 20 m of open water with isolated plants, some of which

were joined into small clusters.

A female *A. viridis* approached the ditch, landed in that part of the ditch with a few *Stratiotes*, and selected a group of seven plants (area covered approx. 0.25 m²) for oviposition. Approached by the author, the animal took off, only to continue immediately with oviposition on another *Stratiotes* of the same cluster.

On the same day a similar observation was made at a locality 2 km away from the first one. At this site, a ditch of similar width was covered over a length of 50 m with clusters of *Stratiotes*, the latter forming a complete cover at three positions, each approximately 3 m long; 40 m further on was a section with single specimens of floating *Stratiotes*; in the middle they formed a compact spot of 0.5 × 0.7 m.

Also in this case a female *A. viridis* disregarded the larger plant carpet, to which it is allegedly more attracted, and chose the small and isolated cluster of *Stratiotes* for oviposition. Even after having been disturbed, the animal returned to the old oviposition site. Although the author stayed for about half an hour at each site, no other *A. viridis* were observed. Both females had passed the larger *Stratiotes*-carpets whilst approaching the site. It is difficult to determine to which extent the densely covered parts have stimulated the dragonflies to seek adjacent sites for oviposition. Although spots of the minimum size reported in literature were at hand and could have easily been chosen for oviposition, both females headed for smaller clusters of *Stratiotes*.

These observations should encourage odonatologists also to check smaller clusters of *Stratiotes* in future investigations.

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