

A NOTE ON THE EXISTENCE OF ANDROCHROME FEMALES IN *CROCOTHEMIS ERYTHRAEA* (BRULLÉ) (ANISOPTERA: LIBELLULIDAE)

Mature females of *C. erythraea* are normally brownish yellow coloured. Although some orange shine may occur, bright red (androchrome) females have not yet been reported. Therefore the two observations described below may be of some interest.

At a gravel pit 1 km E of Ivanci (NE Slovenia, UTM WM97), on 13-VII-1994, a fully red tandem of *Crocothemis* size was spotted. Extremely brief and long distance (15 m) observation made accurate identification uncertain.

However, on 14-VII-1995, at the shallow loam-pits near Zalog by Novo mesto (SE Slovenia, UTM WL07), a closer and more precise observation confirmed the first speculation about the existence of bright red females in *C. erythraea*. What

at first was thought to be a clash between two rival *erythraea* males, turned into a pre-copula and after a few seconds into a normal brief copula. Immediately after the couple had disconnected the female began ovipositing. While the guarding male was clashing with an intruding male, a second intruding male grasped the egg-laying female after its first few dips, they formed a pre-copula and the couple flew away.

*C. erythraea* males are extremely aggressive towards conspecifics and the bright red colour is thought to be the main factor inducing such behaviour. Formation of the second precopula shows that the *C. erythraea* male was able to recognize the female despite its androchrome coloration, probably due to the characteristic egg-laying movements. Aggressive response is apparently triggered and controlled by more than a single factor.

During the second observation the author was accompanied by U. ČERVEK and M. SAMEJA, who witnessed the scene.

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