A SMALL DRAGONFLY COLLECTION FROM TURKMENISTAN

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Abstract – 7 spp. were recorded from southern Turkmenistan of which *Gomphus schneideri* is new to the fauna of Turkmenistan.

Introduction

The odonatological literature dealing with Turkmenistan is scarce and scattered. A first summary was given by POPOVA (1951). She listed a total of 33 species but without giving any references or sources of information. BELYSHEV (1958), therefore, recommended a cautious use of this species list. PAVLYUK & KURBANOVA

(1984) provided data of another collection and assumed five species as being new records for the Turkmenyan fauna. Among those were *Ischnura fountaineae* Morton, 1905, and *Selysiothemis nigra* (Vander Linden, 1825), both of which had been brought on record already by VALLE (1942). PAVLYUK & KURBANOVA (1987) reported *Sympetrum danae* (Sulzer, 1776), and MAUERSBERGER (1990) *Diplacodes lefebvrei* (Ramb., 1842), and *Anax ephippiger* (Burm., 1839), for the first time from the Turkmenian territory. In an account on the central Asian species of the genus *Onychogomphus*, DUMONT et al. (1992) added *O. lefebvrei* (Ramb.), 1842 to the Turkmenian fauna. Finally, in STAROSTIN's (1992) review, a further nine species are to be found.

The present note reports on a small sample of Odonata collected in the surroundings of Ashgabat (37°58'N 58°24'E), mainly at the Karakumsky canal and near the village of Chuly. DUMONT (1996) strongly encouraged a detailed study of the dragonfly fauna of this canal since two centres of endemism may be connected by it. This report is to be understood as a small contribution towards such a study.

Commented records

– *Epallage fatime* (Charp., 1840): 2 ♂, 1 ♀, Chuly, ca 30 km WSW of Ashgabat, 7 May 1993.

The sightings in the Caucasus (AKRAMOWSKI, 1948) and in Bulgaria (BESHOVSKI, 1989) mark the northernmost records of this species. So far, the records in S Turkmenistan (HARITONOV, 1985; PAVLYUK & KURBANOVA, 1984, 1987; this study) seem to represent the northeastern limit of the species' range (see also HEYMER, 1975). Regarding its common occurrence in S Turkmenistan where it has been reported to represent 9% of the specimens out of a sample of 411 dragonflies (PAVLYUK & KURBANOVA, 1987) and its strictly rheophilous habit (HEYMER, 1975) one can speculate that the species goes far more northeast.

– *Calopteryx orientalis* Sel., 1887: 2 ♂, 1 ♀, Karakumsky canal, approx. 25 km W of Ashgabat, 11 April 1993.

The grouping into the *orientalis*-group was based mainly for morphological reasons. RNA analyses (H. Dumont, unpubl. data) will enable further certainty on the phylogenetic placement of this taxon. Meanwhile, the taxonomic confusion within this groups permits a biogeographical discussion.

– *Ischnura elegans pontica* Schmidt, 1938: Karakumsky canal, approx. 25 km W of Ashgabat, 23 April 1993.

– *Ischnura pumilio* (Charp., 1842): Karakumsky canal, approx. 25 km W of Ashgabat, 23 April 1993.

– *Ischnura fountaineae* (Morton, 1905): 1 ♂, 2 ♀, *Artemisia*-dominated semi-desert near Kovata, Karakumsky canal, approx. 50 km W of Ashgabat, 12 April 1993; 1 ♀, Karakumsky canal, approx. 25 km W of Ashgabat, 23 April 1993.

The three *Ischnura* species belong to the more common species in the Turkestan and central Asian region (VALLE, 1942; SCHMIDT, 1955, 1961; HARITONOV, 1975). *I. fountaineae* has been twice reported from Turkmenistan (VALLE, 1942; PAVLYUK & KURBANOVA, 1987).

– *Sympecma paedisca* (Brauer, 1882): 1 ♂, 1 ♀, Karakumsky canal, approx. 25 km W of Ashgabat, 11 April 1993.

According to the key published in DUMONT & BORISOV (1993) these specimens are *paedisca*, rather than *gobica*. Of the latter species, there is a record by BARTENEV (1913) from this site.

– *Gomphus schneideri* Selys, 1850: 1 ♀, Chuly, ca 30 km WSW of Ashgabat, 7 May 1993.

This specimen, among others, provided the basis upon which SEIDENBUSCH (1997) described the new subspecies *transcaspicus*. For morphological details see SEIDENBUSCH (1997). SEIDENBUSCH (1997) designated 5 specimens from the Ashgabat region to this species. Apart from these individuals, the species has not been recorded from Turkmenistan before. Both POPOVA (1951) and STAROSTIN (1992) mentioned *G. vulgatissimus* L., 1758. As the occurrence of this species is unlikely as far SE as Turkmenistan (see SUHLING & MÜLLER, 1996), it is possible that the record of *G. vulgatissimus* refers to *G. schneideri*.

Discussion

When adding up the species mentioned so far from Turkmenistan without a critical consideration (which is urgently needed), a total of 51 species will be obtained. Comparing the species richness to that of neighbouring countries (Afghanistan: 62

- SCHMIDT, 1961; DUMONT, 1975; Kyrgyzstan: 56 - KRYLOVA, 1972; Iran: 79 - SCHMIDT, 1954, DUMONT & HEIDARI, 1996; Tajikistan: 59 - BORISOV, 1987), at least 60 to 70 species could be expected in Turkmenistan. As proposed for Iran (DUMONT & HEIDARI, 1996), a more intense search will certainly increase the number of species. Two sites that were visited also in this study have already been mentioned as harbouring a rich dragonfly fauna, the Karakumsky canal and the rivers Chulinka and Firyuza near Chuly (DUMONT et al., 1992; PAVLYUK & KURBANOVA, 1987; STAROSTIN, 1992; VALLE, 1942).

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