

**PLATYCNEMIS SUBDILITATA SEL. NEW TO THE CANARY ISLANDS? (ZYGOPTERA: PLATYCNEMIDIDAE)**

The odonate fauna of the Canary Islands has received much attention from European odonatologists. Twelve papers and even a small book (M. BAEZ, 1985, *Las libelulas de las Islas Canarias*, Act, Tenerife) are, at least partly, focused on the dragonflies of these islands. With only 10 species recorded, this attention seems somewhat out of proportion. Yet, these well-explored islands still hold some surprises.

During our work in the collection of the Zoological Museum of Amsterdam, we found a ♂ *P. subdilitata*, labelled "Canary Islands, Tenerife, Puerto de la Cruz, 28 March 1971, J.H. Stocks". This species was not known from the Archipelago and it was not expected there either. It is endemic to the Maghreb and widespread and common in large parts of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. It generally occurs at running waters, though breeding in stagnant waters as well (G. JACQUEMIN & J.-P. BOUDOT, 1999, *Les libellules du Maroc*, SFO, Bois-d'Arcy; – R. JÓDICKE et al., 2000, *Int. J. Odonatol.* 3: 41-71). As the odonate fauna of the Canaries is fairly well explored, it is unlikely that the species is indigenous.

There seem to be two possible explanations for this record: either a wanderer from Africa, or a mislabelled specimen.

Dr J.H. Stocks was a Crustacea specialist and had the reputation of a thorough and reliable worker. In the collections of the Zoological Museum of Amsterdam we found a Tachinidae species, collected by him on the Canaries on 28 March 1971. This makes the possibility of a mislabelled specimen less

likely.

The other possibility, a wanderer from continental Africa, seems unlikely, but not impossible. The nearest locality where the species is known to occur is near Fask in southern Morocco (H.J. DUMONT, 1976, *Odonatologica* 5: 107-117), at a distance of more than 500 km from Tenerife. The chance for a small damselfly to cover it seems small. *P. pennipes* (Pall.) is in northern Europe rarely found on islands and its dispersal capacity seems very weak (A. MARTENS, 1997, *Odonatologica* 26: 17-33). However, there are examples of damselflies crossing similar or even greater distances, e.g. *Ischnura pumilio* (Charp.) colonized Madeira from northern Africa (some 600 km), and *I. hastata* (Say) has colonized the Azores from North America (distance of over 3000 km) (J. BELLE & J. VAN TOL, 1990, *Tijdschr. Ent.* 133: 143-147). The winds, originating in the Sahara, favour the odonate dispersal from Africa to the Canary Islands. Therefore, and unless some human agency was involved in the transport (e.g. incidental immigration on a vessel), we assume that our specimen is wind-borne.

The known flight period of *P. subdilitata* starts in the second half of April (JACQUEMIN & BOUDOT, cf. above). The Tenerife record makes it likely that in southern Morocco the species emerges earlier, perhaps during the last decade of March.

Including *P. subdilitata*, 11 species are now known from Tenerife and the Canary Islands.

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