

DREPANOSTICTA STARMUEHLNERI ST. QUENTIN, 1972 FROM SRI LANKA, A SYNONYM OF *D. LANKANENSIS* (FRASER, 1931) (ZYGOPTERA: PLATYSTICTIDAE)

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Abstract – The badly damaged holotype of *D. starmuehlneri* in the Vienna Natural History Museum is compared with Fraser's original description and illustrations and with the type-checked specimens of *D. lankanensis*, and it is concluded the former is a junior synonym of the latter.

Introduction

In Sri Lanka, the family Platystictidae consists of more than 20 exclusively endemic taxa, with remarkable species radiation seen in the genus *Drepanosticta*. A total of 15 endemic representatives of this genus are known from the island with additional taxa being described (BEDJANIČ, 2006; BEDJANIČ et al., 2007; M. Bedjanič, in prep.).

Drepanosticta starmuehlneri was described by Douglas St. Quentin based on a holotype male collected by the Austrian-Ceylonese Hydrobiological Mission in November 1970 (ST. QUENTIN, 1972). The type locality was "Bungalow at Campden Hill" near village Deniyaya in Matara district of Sri Lanka's Southern Province and the type specimen was deposited in the Natural History Museum, Vienna. The basic description lacked detail and quality illustrations, which has resulted in more than three decades of no further information on its taxonomy or distribution.

During a visit to the Natural History Museum in Vienna in October 2007, I used the opportunity to examine the holotype of *D. starmuehlneri*. The type specimen, labeled as "9-XI-1970, Ceylon, Deniyaya", though available, is badly damaged with missing head, prothorax and right hindwing, the thorax is distorted and left wings are glued on the card. However, the abdomen with anal appendages is preserved well.

Unfortunately, the original description proved incorrect in several details. Instead of "segments 8-10 black.", in reality, the abdominal segments 10 and 9 are clearly blue on dorsum, as is the distal third of the 8th abdomi-

nal segment. Although head and prothorax could not be checked, the specimen itself and parts of St. Quentin's description seem to agree with the description of *D. lankanensis* by FRASER (1933a, 1933b). The only exception are basal spines on inferior appendages which, for unknown reason, are not described and properly illustrated in Fraser's original description (FRASER, 1931 also FRASER, 1933a), but are clearly depicted in FRASER (1933b, fig. 12). To ultimately confirm the identity, anal appendages were carefully compared with my own type-checked reference material of *D. lankanensis* from Haputale and no differences were found. Herewith, both taxa are synonymised, *D. lankanensis* having the priority (ICZN, 1999).

Taxonomy

Drepanosticta lankanensis (Fraser, 1931)

Drepanosticta starmuehlneri St. Quentin, 1972
syn. nov.

Discussion

D. lankanensis is endemic to Sri Lanka. Old literature data and some new unpublished records show that it is not so "very rare", as pessimistically stated by BEDJANIČ et al. (2007). It is known from around 40 localities in south-western part of the island (Colombo, Kegalle, Badulla, Ratnapura, Kalutara, Matara and Galle Districts), which is known as the "Wet Zone" and listed among global "hot-spots" for its outstanding biodiversity, also in odonatological sense.

In conclusion, despite exceeding the scope of this note, it should be stressed that in Sri Lanka, several endemic jungle-dwelling members of the family Platystictidae are highly endangered. *D. lankanensis* might not be the case, but some of its congeners have mostly very restricted ranges and due to the undergoing loss of habitat many of them are persisting only in small remaining pockets of their original habitat. As already stated by BEDJANIČ (2006), only serious fau-

nistic work covering the whole island, with focus on still preserved areas and protected areas in central and south-western Sri Lanka, can bring answers to the open conservation questions and concerns. It also goes without saying that the taxonomic revision of Platystictidae of Sri Lanka is badly needed.

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