



AGRION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLDWIDE DRAGONFLY ASSOCIATION

PATRON: Professor Edward O. Wilson FRS, FRSE

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Secretary: Linda Averill. 49 James Rd, Kidderminster, Worcs. DY10 2TR. lindamaverill@aol.com

Editor: Jill Silsby. Sunrise of Banstead, Croydon Lane, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 3AG. JSilsby1@btinternet.com

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EDITORIAL

This number is late in getting to you owing to a number of seriously delaying difficulties. My apologies.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanks to well-harmonized cooperation of the Board of Trustees, especially of Mike and Gordon, the preceding and next Presidents, I have managed to serve for one and a half years as the President without committing any major blunders.

Our Secretary Linda and Treasurer David have been working persistently and devotedly for WDA. The subscription fees they collected for the year 2006 involved those from 42 members who were kind enough to become 'sustaining members', paying 50% more money to contribute to the realization of the WDA's objectives. I would like to express my special thanks to these members for their generosity.

Our Journal, I.J.O., has now been through nine volumes. Thanks to the dedicated editing tasks undertaken by the Managing Editor, Reinhard, and 21 scientists who have been working for 3 years as the members of the Editorial Board, the quality of the journal has been greatly enhanced. I.J.O. now has its own homepage under construction, and this extra advertising, along with the increase in the journal's quality, will hopefully lead to our journal being listed by ISI.

Our Webmaster, Rob, has been managing WDA's home page since 1999 and has distributed WDA's news, AGRION and the Abstracts as well as other Odonatological information to the world. The 'window' of WDA is to be handed to the next Webmaster during the Namibia symposium. I thank Rob and Kevin, his son and assistant webmaster, for their hard work and for giving us such a pleasant opportunity to keep up with the activities of WDA.

I also thank Viola, Göran, Richard and Dennis for their contributions to the management of the Association by splendidly fulfilling their allotted tasks.

Beside the Trustees, I thank Jill for editing such a readable newsletter, Martin Lindeboom, Klaus Reinhardt and Martin Schorr for editing the Odonatological Abstracts which is such a complete source of odonatological research and so very useful for odonatologists of the world, and Eugene and Frank for preparing for the next symposium in Namibia.

I look forward to seeing many of the readers at the Namibia symposium.

Hiddenori Ubukata



Map of Europe showing the countries for which regional coordinators are active. For Germany, Norway and Sweden potential coordinators have yet to be asked.

News of members

Henri Dumont was, as most members will remember, the first Editor of our Journal, then called PANTALA, and he played a big part in the successful launch of WDA. He writes:

"My academic career has just entered its last year. Next October, they will retire me. So, I've started improving my home lab already, as to be able to fill my hours later on...

I am still deep into dragonfly phylogenetics. You may have seen last year's paper on the Caloptera, and I am still adding and correcting things in that group. Among other things, that gives me an excuse to travel, in order to catch "critical missing taxa". This year was a good year, with visits to Bhutan and South China, and for next year I am already planning to go back to Guangdong and Yunnan, and perhaps Laos.

In Laos, there is a young female professor whom I would like to help get started with dragonflies. She has no literature, no equipment, little money – only plenty of students that need subjects to work on, and laboratory space." Henri asks any member with connections in the area to get in touch with him. [Henri.Dumont@ugent.be]

Kate Miller married Tony Joyce in April and we wish her every happiness in the future.

ODONATOLOGICAL NOTES FROM THE UKRAINE

Elena Dyatlova, Odessa National Museum, Ukraine

The year has been fruitful from an odonatological point of view. In May-June Dr. Erik Svensson from the Lund University (Sweden) "sent" me his student Maya Johansson. Our task was to visit different populations of *Ischnura elegans* and to realize the project under the title "Population genetics and evolutionary ecology of *Ischnura elegans*". We visited populations in the lower Danube and Dniestr rivers in the South-western Ukraine and a population in the vicinity of Odessa. Together we investigated the ratio of different female morphs, the density of specimens in populations and the fecundity of different morphs. It was exciting to obtain eggs from *Ischnura* in the laboratory! This method has been tested in Swedish populations before by Erik Svensson and his students so we had very clear instructions on what to do. I enjoyed this work and cooperation with Maya and hope that this winter we'll have time to analyze our results and publish an article to let people know about our discoveries.

During the summer I have visited many picturesque places of my region and in the second half of the summer I worked on the Tacis project (Technical Assistance for the Lower Dniester River Basin Management Plan) on the inventory of fauna of future National Park in the Lower Dniestr which hopefully will be created in the nearest future.

At the end of the summer, together with Vincent Kalkman, I started a new project "Guardians of the watershed: identifying important dragonfly areas in South-west Ukraine". We met in the Ukraine to discuss our first results and visited the Danube Biosphere Reserve. During this time (the middle of August) we observed a huge migration of *Aeshna mixta* and *Sympetrum meridionale*.

In the beginning of September I visited some lovely places in the South of Poland (surroundings of village Dubiecko (Przemyskie uplands) and picturesque mountains in the Bieszczady National Park (South-east corner of the country, along the border with Slovakia and the Ukraine, Subcarpathian Voivodship). My companion was Boguslaw Daraz, true naturalist and photographer of insects.

In the middle of September I visited Roztocze National Park in Eastern Poland (Lublin Voivodship). It was an odonatological workshop organized by Dr. Pawel Buczynski and Dr. Grzegorz Tonczyk in Zwierzyniec. In Poland I saw new biotopes and species that I have never seen in my steppe areas in the South of Ukraine.

For the future, we plan to prepare a list of the areas that are really important for dragonflies in the Southwestern Ukraine and to attract more people to work with Odonata in Ukraine.

THREE NEW DRAGONFLY BOOKS - Bert Orr

The order Odonata is enjoying a golden age of book publication. Never before have we been so well served with regional identification guides and handbooks. This remarkable activity has, in the last six months, reached a new high point with the appearance of three superb volumes, each serving a different zoogeographic region, and each almost certainly destined to become a classic in its own right.

I refer, in order of publication, to: '*Field guide to the dragonflies of Britain and Europe*', written by Klaas-Douwe Dijkstra and numerous collaborators and illustrated by Richard Lewington; '*Dragonfly genera of the New World*', by Rosser Garrison, Natalia von Ellenreider and Jerry Louton; and '*The complete field guide to dragonflies of Australia*', by Günther Theischinger and John Hawking. Each of these books in its own way serves as a model of its genre, and taken together the three volumes demonstrate how differently the faunas of different parts of the world need to be treated, owing to different levels of knowledge and of species diversity. They are also the three most important new references for anyone with a serious interest in world Odonata. I say this firstly because each book admirably fulfils its primary objective of field and/or museum identification, and secondly because, by virtue of its scope and manner of treatment, each book provides a sound overview of its respective fauna, lending an understanding of form, ecology and patterns of diversity and distribution even to the reader who will never have the opportunity to use the book in the field.

Beginning with the European field guide, the tasks of the authors and the illustrator at first seem relatively modest; only 156 species (less than 3 % of the World fauna) occur within the region, which includes all of Europe west of the former USSR, Western Turkey and Western North Africa. Moreover the systematics of the fauna are on a sound footing and the biology of most species is well known. With so few species it is possible to figure all colour variants and immature forms. The challenge for the authors and illustrator, therefore, is to produce a text and accompanying diagrams that add to and complement what has already been published, most notably, Richard Askew's beautiful and well-known guide first published in 1988. In my opinion they have succeeded admirably.

By virtue of the tiny font used, and the small figures, an immense amount of satisfying detail has been packed into this 319 page A5 format book. Presbyopes may protest. Opening chapters deal not only with the usual themes of anatomy (figured in glorious colour) and adult biology (larvae are not treated), but also for the neophyte there is much useful basic information on identification techniques. Simple visual and tabular keys are arranged in a logical hierarchical fashion. The formula is so successful I would consider it worth emulating in any regional field guide, even that of a rich tropical fauna. Any resident or visitor to Europe will appreciate the regional accounts, summarising the fauna for every country, each written by a local specialist, highlighting the usefulness of the multi-authored approach of this book.

The main body of the book provides a species by species account, with most species given a double page spread. Richard Lewington's studies, somewhat stylised watercolour and gauche drawings, are both technically brilliant and breathtakingly beautiful. Particularly delightful are the many coloured details, each executed with painstaking precision, which recreate the effect of the insect seen through a good microscope. In many cases the drawings are supplemented by excellent field photographs, demonstrating characteristic postures and adding verisimilitude to the overall presentation.

The book is rounded off by three technical appendices, including a checklist. For me the acid test of this book is that it is easy to pick up and read, gaining a good appreciation of the European fauna at a distance of 16,000 km. It is obvious it will be supremely useful in the field, in most cases allowing identification even without capture.

The challenges faced by the authors of '*Dragonfly genera of the New World*' are almost diametrically opposite those faced by the European authors. With respect to many animal and plant groups the Neotropical region is the most diverse on earth and Odonata is no exception. In total there are some 1650 species and counting; nearly a third of the world's fauna. Neotropical Odonata have been relatively overlooked compared with birds and butterflies, and our knowledge of the group as a whole, and especially the Zygoptera has scarcely begun to mature.

For this reason, and because of the sheer scale of the fauna, this book treats only the Anisoptera (a companion volume on Zygoptera is in preparation), and seeks to provide reliable keys to generic level. The authors have chosen also to include the well-known Nearctic fauna (US and Canada), a decision which I find especially inspired, as many genera span