

A contribution to the knowledge of the odonatofauna of the Socotra Archipelago (Yemen)

(Insecta: Odonata)

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Abstract. The odonatofauna of the Socotra Archipelago is reviewed on the basis of recently collected material and a literature survey. The occurrence of 17 out of the 18 known species from the main island was confirmed between 2007 and 2010, and information on their distribution patterns was obtained. New information on the species occurring on Abd El-Kuri and Samha islands is presented.

Key words. Dragonflies, Odonata, distribution, Socotra, Yemen.

Introduction

The archipelago of Socotra, which includes the homonymous main island and three smaller islands, Abd El-Kuri, Samha and Darsa, is well known for its high rate of endemism. The odonatofauna of the archipelago is very poorly known. SCHNEIDER & DUMONT (1996) summarised odonatological researches on the main island, Socotra, and highlighted that only two previous papers report original data: MCLACHLAN (in: FORBES 1903) first contributed to knowledge of Socotra island, listing 13 species mostly collected near Hadibu, the main town. Other information was published by KIMMINS (1960). A more recent contribution has been made by SCHNEIDER & DUMONT (1996), who collected 16 out of the 18 species hitherto known on the island. Scattered data (by R. PORTER) are also available online (www.friendsofsocotra.org/docs/rporter/dragonflies.html).

Generic information on Socotran dragonflies, with no description of sampling localities, has also been given by PINHEY (1961), WRANIK (2003) and CHEUNG & DEVANTIER (2006). Two species have been reported from Samha island by WRANIK (2003), although the author did not report the source of these data. Otherwise no information is available about the occurrence of dragonflies on the other islands of the archipelago.

As shown in Fig. 1, the published localities and most previous collecting localities are situated in the north-eastern part of the main island. Between 2007 and 2010 three surveys were organised within the ongoing framework of the “Socotra Conservation and Development Project” funded by the Cooperazione Italiana (MAAEE) and under the auspices of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), and these aimed at a more comprehensive survey including other localities on the main island.