

Odonata (Damsel and Dragonflies) from the Little Sandy Desert.

A.N. Start.

Introduction.

During a three week biological survey of sites in the south west Little Sandy Desert odonatans were noted opportunistically. This is within the odonatan biogeographical area "Inland Australia" of Watson, Theischinger and Abbey (1991). The weather was dry with some frosty nights at Cooma and cool nights elsewhere. Days were moderately warm, especially at Beyond. (SvL has temperature records and detailed site descriptions). Winds were moderate to strong, mostly easterly.

Itinerary.

Cooma Well and surrounds	August 12-17 1997.
Savory Camp and surrounds	August 18-22 1997
Beyond Camp and surrounds	August 23-28 1997

Surface water.

No surface water seen except at survey site S1 on Savory Creek (23° 52' 57"S; 120° 38' 33"E) where there was a pool several hundred meters long. For the most part it had a muddy bottom and was bordered by dense rush-like stands of *Samolus junceus* (Primulaceae) to 0.5 m high and 1 to 5 m wide, backed by a linear fringe of *Melaleuca* spp. (Myrtaceae) shrubby-trees with dense foliage to near ground level and an understorey of *S. junceus*. The whole area was moderately to severely trampled by stock (cattle and donkeys). Although the pool is semi-permanent or permanent, at this time it was much more extensive than normal. There is an area of low, rocky cliffs bordering a section of the lower end on the south side of the pool. This is on a bend and thus scoured by floods. It seems to be adjacent to a permanent part of the pool.

Results are tabulated below. (* specimens with ANS)

Family	Genus and species	Sites	Notes
Coenagrionidae	<i>Ischnura aurora</i> *	S1	Uncommon; in <i>Samolus</i> at pool margin
Coenagrionidae	<i>Xanthagrion erythroneurum</i> *	S1	Common; in <i>Samolus</i> at pool margin and under <i>Melaleuca</i>
Aeshnidae	<i>Hemianax papuensis</i>	B,C,S,S1	Common; in sandstone valleys and over spinifex. Common at S1
Corduliidae	<i>Hemicordulia tau</i>	B,C,S	Occasional; seen flying over spinifex
Libellulidae	<i>Diplacodes bipunctata</i> *	B,C,S, S1	Occasional; at all sites, under mulga, in sandstone valleys, over spinifex. Common at S1 in <i>Samolus</i>
Libellulidae	<i>Diplacodes haematodes</i>	S1	Common; at S1 only on the rocky banks.
Libellulidae	<i>Orthetrum caledonicum</i>	S1	Occasional; at S1 only on the rocky banks.

¹ B = Beyond sites; C = Cooma sites; S = Savory Creek sites (S1 = Site S1, the pool)

Discussion

Watson *et al.* record seven damselflies from Inland Australia; two species were recorded here. Both are common and very widespread. They record fourteen dragonflies from Inland Australia; five were recorded here. All are very common and widespread species often seen a long way from surface water. No doubt work in warmer months from December to March would add substantially to the number of species known to occur in the area.

Reference.

Watson, J.A.L., Theischinger, G. and Abbey, H.M. 1991. *The Australian Dragonflies. A guide to the identification, distribution and habitats of Australian Odonata.* CSIRO, Canberra and Melbourne.