



## Research Article

# *Sympetrum hypomelas* (Selys, 1884), an Addition to Anisoptera Fauna of Pakistan

Hajira Nur-ul-Islam<sup>1</sup>, Ahmed Zia<sup>2\*</sup>, Khurshaid Khan<sup>1</sup>, Hira Ali<sup>3</sup> and Abdul Aziz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Zoology, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; <sup>2</sup>National Insect Museum, National Agriculture Research Center, Islamabad, Pakistan; <sup>3</sup>Department of Zoology, University of Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

**Abstract** | *Sympetrum hypomelas* (Selys, 1884) is added to the Anisoptera fauna of Pakistan by reporting it from district Swabi of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Out of 33 sampling sites, specimens of *S. hypomelas* were found from a single locality of the district. Identification of the specimens was done at National Insect Museum, Islamabad. Detailed description including synonyms, differential characters for the species, previous global records, habitat description, measurements of body parts and ecological data for the positive localities are provided. With the addition of this taxon, Anisoptera fauna of Pakistan now counts 74 species. The area carries important ecology and is less explored for odonate fauna. Although in recent past, few faunistic studies were conducted in this area; yet these couldn't add anything new to the country's fauna. The area under district Swabi represents many lush green valleys and possesses lots of water bodies which support a broad complex of Odonata. More surveys in the district are suggested to unveil probable new records from the area.

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\***Correspondence** | Dr. Syed Ahmed Zia, National Insect Museum, National Agriculture Research Center, Islamabad, Pakistan; **Email:** sai-yedahmed@gmail.com

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## Introduction

Odonates are an important group of class Insecta. They have versatile qualities; being used in medical field for the treatment of throat and preparation of eye ointments (Rehman *et al.*, 2020), water pollution and ecosystem quality indication (Khan *et al.*, 2016; Zia *et al.*, 2018) and to control dengue, malaria, yellow fever vectors (Din *et al.*, 2013; Mehmood *et al.*, 2020), tsetse fly, aphid, jassids, bollworms, borers and white flies (Zia *et al.*, 2008, 2009; Rafi *et al.*, 2009). Odonates are diverse group of flying insects representing more than 6500 species worldwide (Zia *et al.*, 2011; Mehmood *et al.*, 2021).

Family Libellulidae is the largest family of order Odonata. It includes more than 1000 species (Silsby, 2001; Zia *et al.*, 2019). In Pakistan, family Libellulidae is reported as a dominant group too, by various workers like Ahsan *et al.* (2019), Zia *et al.* (2019). Among these, *Sympetrum* genus is known mostly from western parts of the country that comes under Oriental region. Within *Sympetrum* genus more than 60 species are known all over the world (Pilgrim and Von Dohlen, 2007).

Genus *Sympetrum* was first time described by Newman during the year 1883 (Dijkstra and Pilgrim, 2007). It has been reported from Nepal (Mahato and

Edds, 1993; Sharma *et al.*, 2018), Arunachal Pradesh (Ram and Prasad, 1999), Northern Italy (Ottolenghi, 1987), Belgium (Michiels and Dhondt, 1990), Japan (Matsura *et al.*, 1995; Ishizawa, 1998), Iran (Heidari and Dumont, 2002; Ebrahimi, 2009), India (Sharma, *et al.*, 2009; Babu and Nandy, 2010; Kulkarni and Subramanian, 2013; Subramanian and Babu, 2014; 2017; Tiple and Koparde, 2015), USA (Sformo and Doak, 2006; Pilgrim and Von Dohlen, 2007), Turkey (Kazanci, 2010), Taiwan (Tang *et al.*, 2013), Russia (Popova and Haritonov, 2014), Manipur (Takhelmayum and Gupta, 2014), West Bengal (Dawn, 2014), Southwestern Nigeria (Adu *et al.*, 2015), Western Bhutan (Mitra, 2006; Gyeltshen and Kalkman, 2017), Pakistan (Chaudhry *et al.*, 2016), Himachal Pradesh (Babu, 2017), China (Zhang *et al.*, 2018).

As far as species count is concerned, from neighboring countries to Pakistan a record of twenty-six species of *Sympetrum* genus are known. Among these, two species are known from China (Zhang, 2017), twelve species from India (Subramanian and Babu, 2017), eight are documented from Iran (Schneider *et al.*, 2018) and four are assessed from Afghanistan (Butler, 2020). In Pakistan there is a documented record of six species for genus *Sympetrum* (Kalkman *et al.*, 2020). These are *Sympetrum fonscolombii* (Selys, 1840), *Sympetrum meridionale* (Selys, 1841), *Sympetrum speciosum* Oguma, 1915 (earlier known as *Sympetrum haematoneura* Fraser, 1936), *Sympetrum striolatum commixtum* (Selys, 1884), *Sympetrum vulgatum decoloratum* (Selys, 1884) and *Sympetrum orientale* (Selys, 1883) (Fazlullah, 2016). Among these *Sympetrum orientale* (Selys, 1883) is a doubtful record for Pakistan, as the author just listed it in the document providing no details for its population, habitat description and ecology etc.

Within the documented species of *Sympetrum* genus, *Sympetrum hypomelas* is a rare known species. It was first reported from the foothills of the Himalayas (Northern Bengal) during 1884 (Dumont, 2003). Afterwards it was reported from India (Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkand, Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Assam, Uttar Pradesh), Myanmar, Bangladesh, China (Tibet or Xizang), Nepal (Subramanian, 2010) and Western Bhutan (Gyeltshen *et al.*, 2017). It is a late season flier and distinguished only by color differences (Pilgrim and Von Dohlen, 2007). *Sympetrum hypomelas* is

known with limited information for its lifecycle, population and distribution. Yet it has a known upper limit of 2,850 meters and habitat details including moist Savana, tropical moist and sub-tropical shrub lands, fresh water marshes, pools, shrub cover rivers, streams and even around water falls (Subramanian, 2010). Knowing its presence in neighboring countries to Pakistan and resemblance in ecology and topography of known sites, search for *S. hypomelas* was initiated in Pakistan by conducting hectic surveys and sampling in expected niches.

## Materials and Methods

Surveys were conducted during active season of the years 2017–2018 in four tehsils (Lahore, Swabi, Topi and Razzar) of district Swabi. District Swabi lies at longitude 72.47° (East) and latitude 34.12° (North), with a total surface area of 1543km<sup>2</sup>. It shares its North border with district Buner (Swat), South-East border with district Haripur of K.P. Province and district Attock of Punjab province while Western part adjoins district Nowshera and Mardan of K.P. Province. Topographically the district lies in the junction of rivers, Indus and Kabul and represents both hills as well as plains; hilly area in North and fertile land of plains in South. The region has distinct summer and winter seasons and total annual rainfall is 639 mm. Average annual temperature is 22.2°C and most of the rain received during the month of July. The area is situated 34.12055°N and 72.470154° E. Thirty-three sites were visited (Figure 1) in the whole district and for the positive sites (sites where *S. hypomelas* was found), details like, date of collection, latitude, longitude, and temperature were noted. Recorded samples were initially observed in field while their representatives were brought to laboratory for detailed study. Identification and measurements of the samples was done at National Insect Museum, NARC Islamabad under Olympus (SZ2-ILST) stereoscope. Specimens were identified following taxonomic keys of Chaudhry (2010) and Raza (2015) for generic level, while for the species identification and perplexing characters, Fraser (1936) was followed.

## Results and Discussion

During current study among 33 visited localities, specimens of *Sympetrum hypomelas* were found at a single locality of tehsil Razzar; after complete search of one year. Both male and female specimens were

recorded. Details for the recorded samples is provided as below:

Name of the species: *Sympetrum hypomelas* (Selys, 1884)

Synonym/s: *Sympetrum himalayanum* Navás, 1934

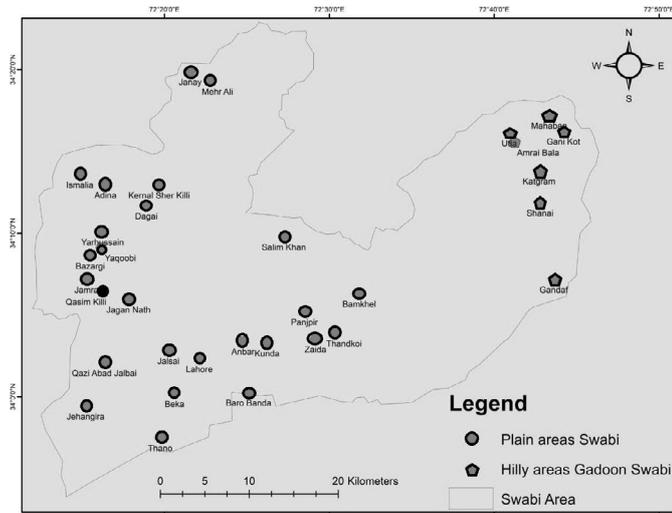


Figure 1: Map showing surveyed localities during present study.

**Material(s) examined**

Locality: Tehsil Razzar: Village, Qassam Killi/ also known as Shadad Killi (34.10759°N, 72.27002°E; 1112ft), 19. ix. 2018, 1♂; 24. ix. 2018, 1♀.

Measurements of body parts were observed as below; Male (♂): Forewing = 31-32 mm, hind wing = 33-35 mm, abdomen = 25-26 mm

Female (♀): Forewing = 31-32 mm, hind wing = 30-31 mm, abdomen = 25-26 mm

The specimens tally with the description in Fraser (1936) except for some minor differences which are cited as follows,

**Male**

Head: labium mat black ventrally, labrum and face bright yellow, frons non-metallic, eyes grayish-brown above, bluish laterally with narrow black border. Prothorax: small, black bearing hairs. Thorax: Dorsum of thorax with one broad black and two yellow markings while laterally thorax covered by two yellow strips separated from one another through black strip. Legs: black. Wings: transparent wings except base of hind wings with small yellowish-brown spot, pterostigma unicolorous, short and same sized in all wings, 11½-11½ antenodals, 9-9 postnodals nerves present in forewings and 8-8 antenodals, 10-9 postnodals nerves in hind wings. Abdomen: medium sized slim, black with yellow dorsal markings, first

three segments bright yellow but laterally yellow markings start from fourth to seven segments and last two segments of abdomen dark black color. Male and female closely resemble to each other except for few characters discussed below. Anal appendages: black apically, superior and inferior anal appendages make an oval shape structure.

**Female**

Similar to male except for following differences. Wings: 11½-10 antenodals, 8-7 postnodal veins present in forewings and 8-8 antenodals, 10-9 postnodals in hindwings. Anal appendages: tapering, black.

**Comments on habitat**

Specimens were collected from a perennial stream in a plain, fertile village (Shadad Killi) of tehsil Razzar. Although the source of water was natural spring, yet the clean water in the stream get polluted during rainy seasons due to frequent flooding faced in the area. Stream was surrounded by dwarf as well as tall flora such as *Arundo donax* L. and *Cynodon plectostachyus* (L.). There were maize fields and lots of herbs grown in close vicinity. A thick shrub cover was also present all around.

*Sympetrum hypomelas* is hereby first time reported from Pakistan, thus adding new topographical record to its known distribution. Selys (1884) reported it from foothills of the Himalayas in Indian side. With its addition, Anisoptera fauna of Pakistan now counts 74 species. If we see its global distribution, Mitra and Thinley (2005) collected it from Northeastern Bhutan while in Maharashtra India, Tiple and Koparde (2015) collected its specimens from plains. Gyeltshen and Kalkman (2017) recorded it from western Bhutan from a water field and Satpathi (2017) reported it from rice fields in Eastern India. It is evident from these records that the species has a variable habitat preference; it is recorded from plains as well as hilly areas, rivers as well as crop fields. It is not restricted to any specific water body as noticed for many odonate species, especially of Zygoptera. In the present work, it is reported from district Swabi which comes under himalayan foothills of Pakistan, yet in the form of some distant part. The positive site shows similar niche for the species as earlier documented in above works.

District Swabi was initially surveyed in recent past by

Rehman *et al.* (2019, 2020) reporting 36 species from the area. Yet, the surveys did not bring forward any new information for scientific community and listed commonly occurring species of the area. Knowing the topography, ecology and presence of unlimited water resources in the district, it was hypothesized that thorough field surveys in the district can bring forward valuable records. Present study was therefore planned and special emphasis was given to localities which were ignored in work of Rehman *et al.* (2019, 2020). The effort became fruitful by finding specimens of *S. hypomelas*. It is however suggested that further deep in the valleys surveys can bring forward more important records of Odonata from the area. Also, search for *S. hypomelas* should be initiated in district Attock, Buner and Haripur to add-up its topographical and geographical range.

### Novelty Statement

This paper hereby reports first record of *Sympetrum hypomelas* for Pakistan.

### Author's Contribution

**Hajira Nur-ul-Islam:** Recorded data and specimens being student.

**Ahmed Zia:** Did identification of the specimens being country expert on Odonata and also did writeup of the manuscript.

**Khurshaid Khan and Hiran Ali:** Supervised all research work conducted in laboratory and field being an academic supervisor and field collection helper respectively.

**Abdul Aziz:** Did proof reading and paid publication fee.

### Conflict of interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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