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Notes on a small Odonata collection from Tawi-Tawi, Sanga-Sanga and Jolo islands, Philippines

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Abstract

Sulu region is among the least explored faunal region in the Philippine archipelago. Odonatologically, this region is poorly studied until recently. Presently a survey conducted in July 1 – 14, 2011 revealed ten new records in Tawi-Tawi raising the total number of Odonata to 54. Three new species records were made for Sanga-Sanga raising the known number in that island to 34. Three species were recorded for the first time in Jolo raising the total number to 18. One new species of damselfly was found and several questionable and possible new species of dragonflies were documented.

Introduction

The Philippine archipelago is divided into six bio-geographic regions. Geologically, it reflects the existing land masses during the Pleistocene when seawater level drops joining present day islands into large landmasses. Although these regions classically represent the vertebrate distribution in the archipelago, invertebrate including Odonata shows similar distributional pattern (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

The Sulu bio-geographic region (Figure 1) lies in southern Philippines. It is composed of several islands and islets that dot the Sulu Sea. The main islands are Jolo (Figure 2) and Tawi-Tawi (Figure 3). This region is very interesting biologically as it hosts several endemic species of flora and fauna (http://www.newcapp.org/tawi-tawi.php; access: 22 Dec. 2012). Another point of interests is its close proximity with Borneo hence some representatives from that area are found or expected to be found.

Despite being biologically interesting, the region remains poorly explored. The socio-political situation in the area makes survey very difficult if not impossible. Jolo Island for the past decade served as the bastion of rebel group specializing in kidnapping and piracy. Presently, some foreigners are still in the mountains held captive including Lorenzon Vinciguerra, a well known ornithologist. He is the collector or part

of the team collecting some interesting Philippine Odonata. Existing surveys are all limited and restricted around the capital of these islands. The most recent odonatological survey in Jolo Island for instance was over 20 years ago and within the city boundary. No biological data came from its mountain as it is closed from biologists due to security concern.

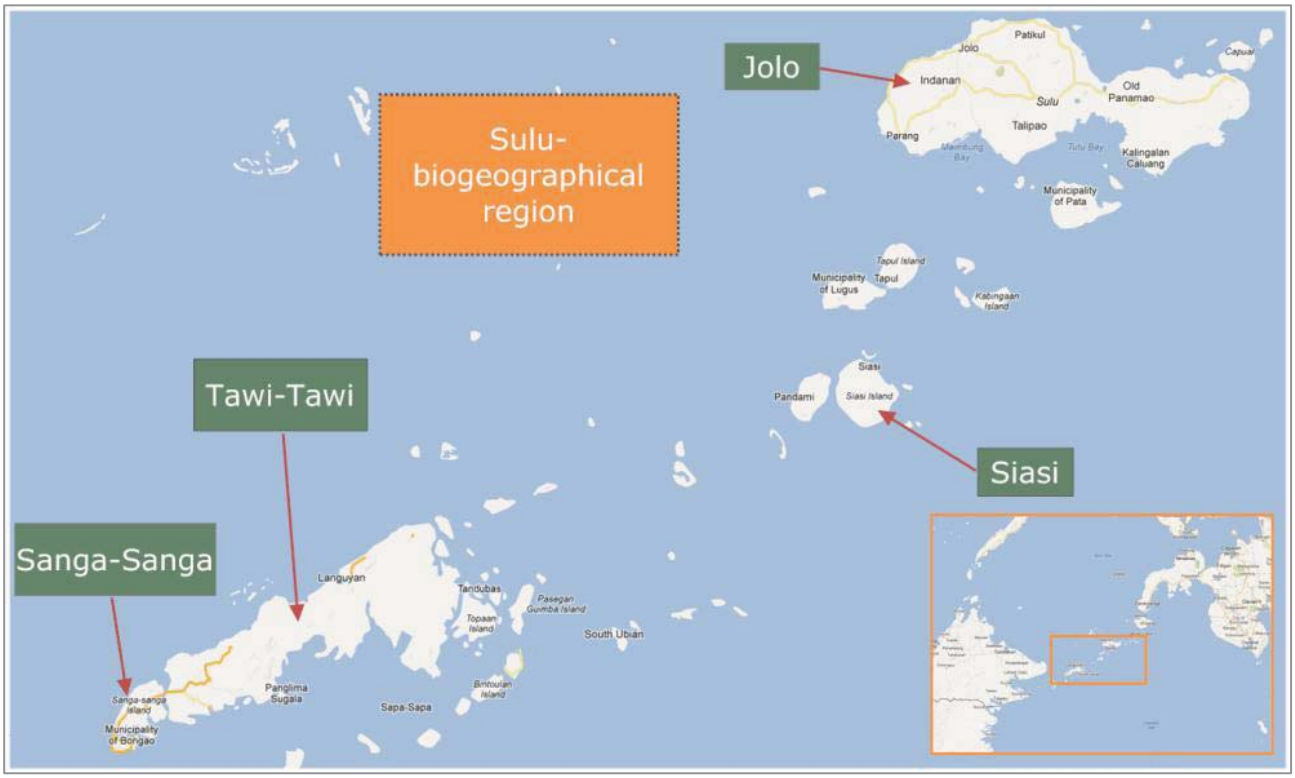

Figure 1. Sanga-Sanga-Island west of Tawi-Tawi, Siasi and Jolo are located between Borneo in the west and Mindanao in the east.

Figure 2a. Jolo City, Jolo Island.

Figure 2b. Jolo City with Mt. Bahu at the back.

Figure 3. Ferry in Zamboanga City port.

Odonatologically, this region is poorly known. The first Odonata recorded from it is *Rhinocypha hageni* Krüger, 1898, an endemic species confined in Jolo and based only on the type material collected over a century now. Since the description of *Rhinocypha hageni*, it is only in 1992 that another collecting trip has been done in Jolo Island (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997). Lieftinck (1974) listed 15 species in Tawi-Tawi based on the materials collected from the Danish Noona Dan expedition in 1961 – 62. Later, Hämäläinen & Müller (1997) raised this number to 44 species based on the materials collected from 1989 – 1992. From Sanga-Sanga, Hämäläinen & Müller (1997) listed 31 species.

Recently after several failed plans by the first author, a short trip to Sulu region has materialized. The whole trip lasted for nearly two weeks and manned by the second author. The second author took a ferry from Zamboanga City (Figure 3) and landed in Bongao Island (Figure 4), the political capital of Tawi-Tawi. Explorations to forested areas in the municipalities of Tarawakan, Buan and Magsaggawin in the southern part of the island of Tawi-Tawi (Figure 5) had been made. Several fluvial systems were visited (Figure 6) and several habitat threats were encountered (Figure 7). The northern part of the island is impossible to survey at present due to recent insurgency issue. Several interesting species of flora and fauna are encountered including a Sundaland species of turtle – *Cycledes dentata* (Asian Leaf Turtle) and threatened species of fruit bats (see Figure 17).

Figure 4a. Bongao island, a. Distant view of the island.

Figure 4b, c. Provincial Capitol building, c. Port of Bongao.

Figure 5. Distant view of Tawi-Tawi Island

Figure 6a. Study sites in Tawi-Tawi, a. Mini waterfalls.

Figure 6b, c. Study sites in Tawi-Tawi: b. Forested rivers, c. Forested streams.

Figure 6d, e. Study sites in Tawi-Tawi: d. Forested creeks, e. Forested ponds.

Figure 7a, b. Habitat threats noted in Tawi-Tawi, a. Old Kaingin field with newly planted Cassava plants, b. New Kaingin site.

Figure 7c, d. Habitat threats noted in Tawi-Tawi, c. Remnants of wood slab after logging, d. Road construction across the forest, e. Logs along the road.

Figure 7e. Logs along the road.

Figure 8a. Lake site in Sanga-Sanga Island, a. northern part of the lake.

Figure 8 b, c. Lake site in Sanga-Sanga Island, b. southern part of the lake, c. forested portion of the lake.

After a few days stay, several locals are already questioning the intention of the survey in Tawi-Tawi hence it was cut short. Some locals are already thinking that the intention of the travel is more than Odonata study, and taking photographs is looked with some paranoia. Due to potential threat of safety the second author had to cut his travel in Tawi-Tawi.

Instead of returning to Mindanao, the second author asked from locals about potential sites in nearby island. He was informed that there is a lake at the centre of Sanga-Sanga Island (Figure 8). Thus the site is surveyed but only for a day. The present state of disturbance in Sanga-Sanga and local suspicion prompted us to decide to discontinue the survey in Sanga-Sanga. The mentioned lake is the only freshwater body in the island. It is surrounded by agricultural land and a small community.

Leaving Tawi-Tawi and Sanga-Sanga, the second author went to Jolo after making a short stop in Siasi Island (Figure 9). The island is partly cleared but some good forest can be seen from afar. The short stop did not allow any excursion. The town proper is heavily populated and no near fresh water source was noted. Majority of the locals got their fresh water from well as per interview with the locals. Odonatological information from this island is very limited with only two recorded species (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

Figure 9a. Siasi Island, near the coast of Siasi.

Figure 9b. poster in the port of Siasi.

Jolo City of the island of Jolo is a heavily populated area. It is very difficult to secure a local guide in this island. It is totally impossible to persuade the locals to guide outside the city proper. They are afraid to venture into forested areas due to strong presence of insurgents. After several negotiations, an excursion is agreed in one fresh-water source located at the boundary of the city proper (Figure 10). During the day of the trip a pregnant woman is abducted and killed just a few kilometres from the explored site. The site is heavily disturbed as dozens of locals used the area for washing, bathing and even cleaning large trucks. The fifteen recorded species (see results) from this island is very limited considering its size.

Use of Money from the IDF

The money granted by the IDF was used for wage, daily cost of living and transportations of Hilario Cahilog who organised and conducted sampling of regional Odonata. All of the expenses incurred during the assessment came from IDF grant.

Odonata were recorded and voucher specimens were collected on July 1 – 14, 2011. Although the weather was relatively fine during the survey, frequent rain was experienced. This limit the number of species collected.

Figure 10a, b. Site in Jolo, a. Huge spring that serve as water source, b. Town's folk bathing and washing in the spring.

Results

The present account lists fifty eight species under eight families; the list includes published records and material from the trip in 2011.

1. Twelve previously documented species were not found during the present survey.
2. Ten new records were made in Tawi-Tawi raising the total number of Odonata to 54.
3. Three new species records were made for Sanga-Sanga raising the known number in that island to 34.
4. Three species were recorded for the first time in Jolo raising the total number to 18.
5. One new species of damselfly was found and several questionable and possible new species of dragonflies were documented.

Annotated Lists of species

[*new island record; **not found in the present survey]: Distribution: Tawi-Tawi: T; Sanga-Sanga: S; Jolo: J.

Coenagrionidae

1. *Agriocnemis femina femina* (Brauer, 1868) [T, *S, J]
2. *Argiocnemis rubescens intermedia* Selys, 1877 [T, S, *J]
3. *Ceriagrion lieftincki* Asahina, 1967 [T, S, J] (Figure 11)

Figure 11. *Ceriagrion lieftincki* male.

Figure 12. ***Ischnura senegalensis*** **devouring a male of** ***Xiphiagrion cyanomelas*** **that is on tandem.**

4. *Ischnura senegalensis* (Rambur, 1842) [T, *J] (Figure 12)

5. *Pseudagrion microcephalum* (Rambur, 1842) [J]

6. *Pseudagrion p. pilidorsum* (Brauer, 1868) [T, S, J]
   The local population has reduced reddish markings on the last abdominal segments. It is also relatively smaller as compared to other populations from various islands in the Philippine archipelago.

7. *Pseudagrion* sp.n. [*T, *S] 4m 1-14.viii.2011 (Figure 13)

Figure 13a. ***Pseudagrion*** **sp.n., a. male.**

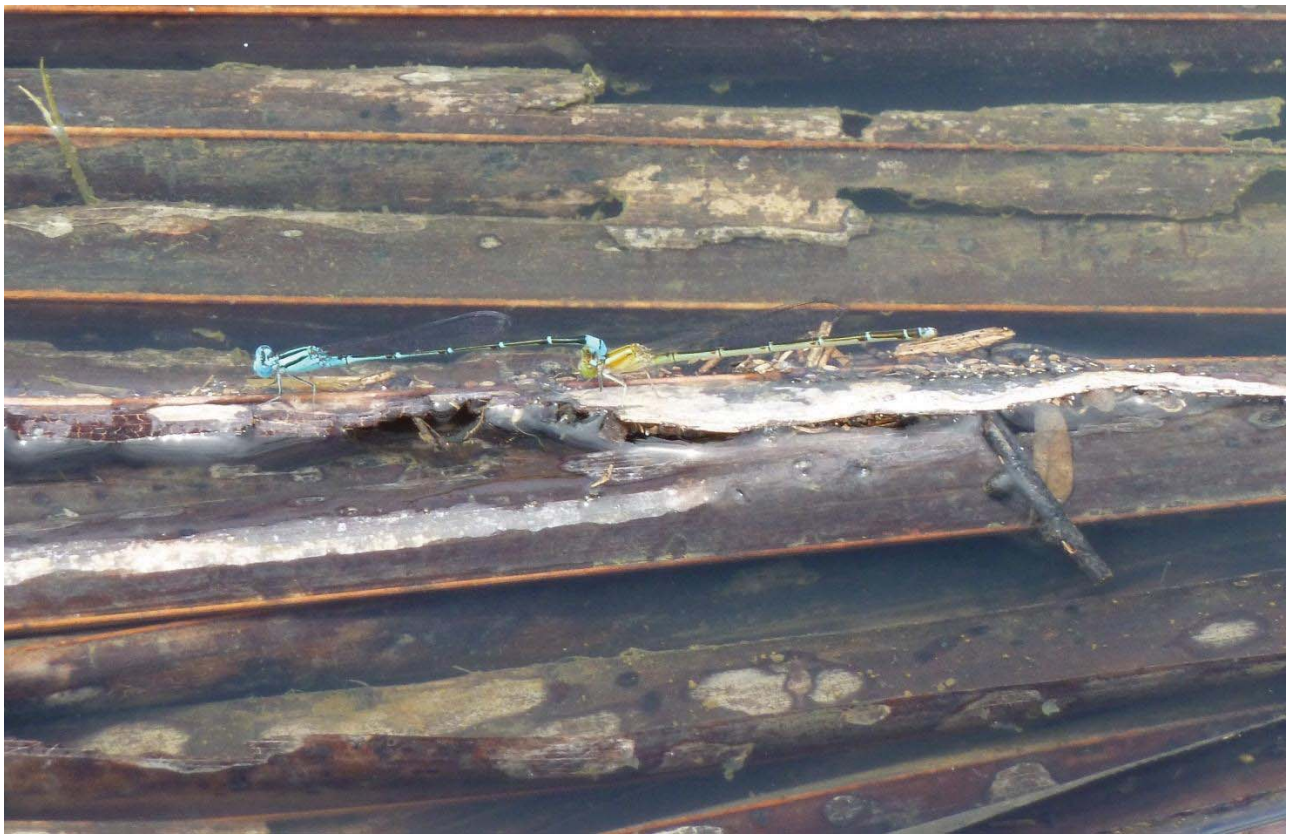

Figure 13b. *Pseudagrion* sp.n., b. pair in tandem.

Among the Philippine *Pseudagrion*, this species is similar to *P. microcephalum* and *P. evanidum* in coloration. It differs from those species on the extent of blue coloration on the abdominal segments and the shape of cerci. Comparing with its close congeners, it is closest to *P. lalakense* in Borneo.

Figure 14a. *Sangabasis circularis*, a. male.

8. *Sangabasis circularis* (Lieftinck, 1974) [T, S, *J] (Figure 14)

This species is well distributed in the region. I find no structural variation between Jolo and Tawi-Tawi populations despite the distance between these two islands. It

is interesting however to note that Tawi-Tawi populations have distinct variation from the Sibutu Island populations, an island much closer to Tawi-Tawi. The present survey did not manage to reach the southern most island of Sibutu.

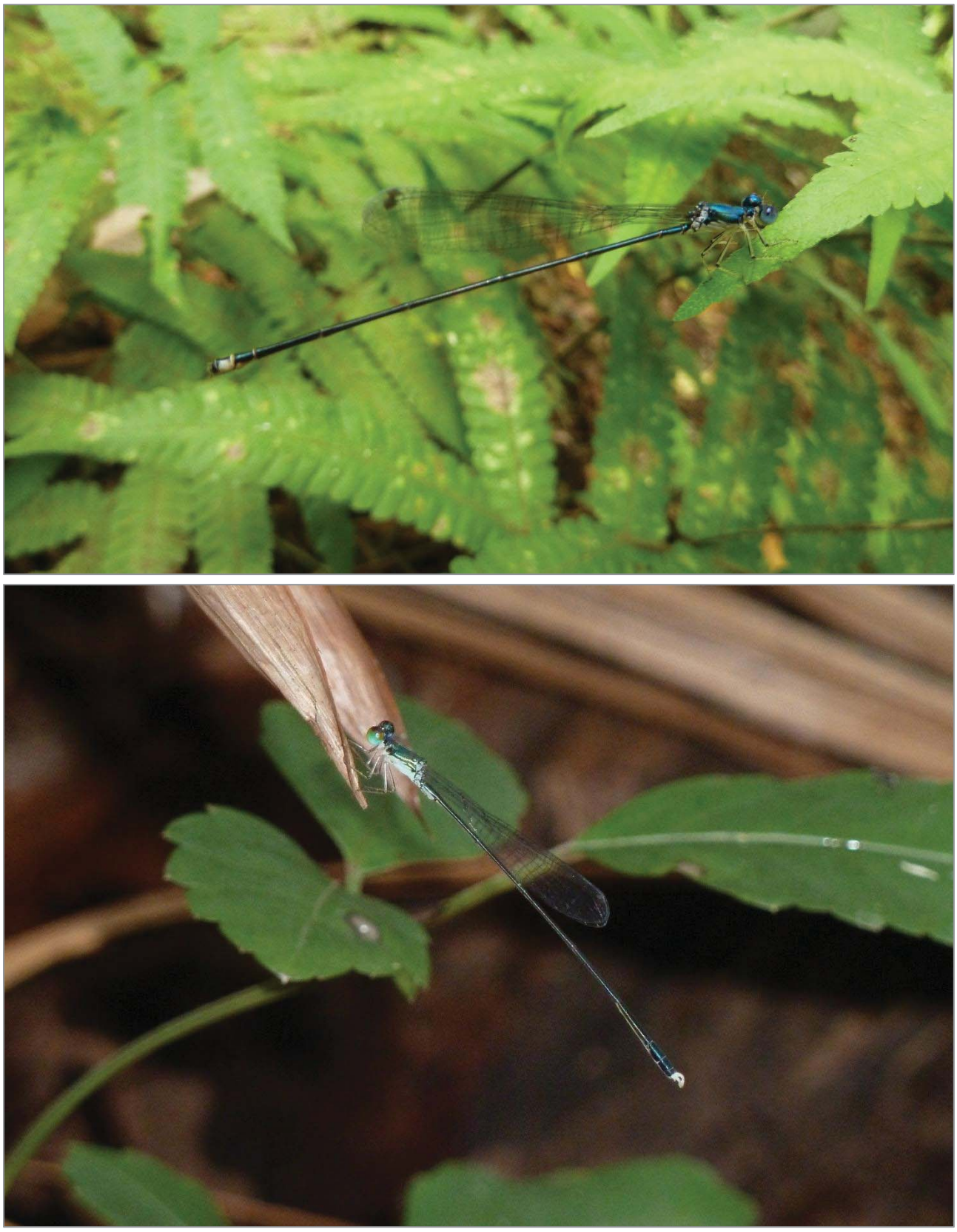

Figure 14 b, c. *Sangabasis circularis*, b. female, c. another male.

9. *Teinobasis samaritis* Ris, 1915 [T, S]

10. *Xiphiagrion cyanomelas* Selys, 1876 [T, *S] (Figure 15)

Figure 15. ***Xiphiagrion cyanomelas*.**

Chlorocyphidae

11. *Rhinocypha hageni* Krueger, 1898 [**J]
This species was recorded in Jolo (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997). Since the species was described no additional material came to light. The presence of insurgents in the mountains of Jolo is the main hindrance for rediscovery of this species.

Figure 16. ***Rhinocypha latimaculata.***

12. *Rhinocypha latimaculata* Lieftinck 1974 [T] (Figure 16)

This species is recorded along open areas at the edge of forested streams. Although the species is listed as vulnerable by the IUCN 2010 assessment, no conservation measures has been done to protect it. The present habitat disturbances noted during the survey present significant threat to this island endemic and other threatened species (Figure 17).

Lestidae

12. *Lestes quercifolia* (Selys, 1878) [S] (Figure 18)

Figure 17a. Some threatened vertebrates: flying foxes.

Platystictidae

13. *Drepanosticta krios* van Tol, 2005 [T] (Figure 19)

This species is the most dominant damselfly noted on well shaded springs. It was found on almost all sites explored in Tawi-Tawi. Tawi-Tawi is the terra typica of this widely distributed species in Mindanao. This species is absent in the nearby island of Sanga-Sanga.

Figure 17b. Some threatened vertebrates: Asian leaf turtle, a documentation of this species in the island after several decades.

Figure 18. ***Lestes quercifolia.***

Van Tol (2005) erected this species and separated it from its closest relative *Drepanosticta aries*, a species confined within the vicinity of Mt. Apo (Mindanao). Present distributional range of *D. krios* is very widespread among the Philippine Platystictidae. Unlike other Platystictidae that is confined to an island, or a particular range of an island, this species covers two faunal regions: Mindanao and Sulu biogeographic region.

Figure 19. ***Drepanosticta krios.***

Calopterygidae

14. *Vestalis melania* Selys, 1873 [**J]
This species was previously recorded in Jolo (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997) which represents the southernmost distribution of this widely distributed species in the Philippine archipelago.

Aeshnidae

15. *Anax panybeus* Hagen, 1867 [**S]
This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

16. *Anax* sp. [*T] 3m 2f (Figure 20)
The Philippines has three recognised species of *Anax*, one of which is potentially

new to science (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997). The present species is clearly distinct from *A. panybeus* and *Anax* sp. (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997). It has distinct T-spot on frons, predominantly blackish abdomen and a relatively large species. There is a need to carefully review the members of this genus especially the Oriental species.

Figure 20. *Anax* sp., female ovipositing.

17. *Gynacantha alcathoe* Lieftinck, 1961 [**S]
    This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

18. *Gynacantha arsinoe* Lieftinck, 1948 [**T]
    This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

19. *Gynacantha bayadera* Selys, 1891 [**T]
    This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

20. *Heliaeschna simplicia* (Karsch, 1889) [*T, S]
    This species is relatively common in Tawi-Tawi compared to other islands in the Philippines.

21. *Oligoaeschna* sp. [T] 1f, 1-14.viii.2011 (Figure 21)
    The present specimen has five cells in the anal loop. The specimen is difficult to identify due to missing anal appendages. Presently Philippines has three endemic species and several possible new species (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

Figure 21a, b. *Oligoaeschna* sp., a. lateral view, b. dorsal view.

Figure 21c. *Oligoaeschna* sp., close-up view.

Figure 22. *Hemicordulia mindana mindana.*

Corduliidae

22. *Epophthalmia v. vittigera* (Rambur, 1842) [T, S]

23. *Hemicordulia m. mindana* Needham & Gyger, 1937 [T] (Figure 22)

24. *Macromidia* sp. [*T] 1f, 1-14.viii.2011 (Figure 23)
A single female specimen does not fit the description of *Macromidia samal* (widespread in Philippines) and *M. asahinai* (Palawan). More materials are needed to elucidate the identity of the Tawi-Tawi population.

25. *Macromia cincta* Rambur, 1842 [**T]
This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

Figure 23. *Macromidia* sp.

Figure 24. *Aethriamanta gracilis.*

Libellulidae

26. *Aethriamanta gracilis* (Brauer, 1878) [T] (Figure 24)

27. *Agrionoptera insignis* (Rambur, 1842) [T, S]

28. *Brachydiplax c. chalybea* Brauer, 1868 [T]

29. *Camacinia gigantea* (Brauer, 1867) [T, S] (Figure 25)

Unlike other areas of the Philippines, this species is very abundant in Tawi-Tawi.

Figure 25. *Camacinia gigantea.*

30. *Cratilla lineata assidua* Lieftinck, 1953 [T, S]

31. *Diplacina* sp. [J, **T]

The Tawi-Tawi population was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997). However, present survey did not reveal this species due to limited survey period. The single male now in NCB Naturalis Netherland was collected in the northern part of Tawi-Tawi Island. Previous study of the said single male specimen revealed its close affinity with *D. bolivari* with difference on the degree of melanisation and on the hamulus.

The Jolo population could not be verified since the record is based only on sightings.

32. *Diplacina braueri* (Selys, 1882) [T, J]

The Philippine *Diplacina* is in need of careful study as each island or regions in the archipelago shows distinct differences. Recently Villanueva 2012, erected three species previously grouped with *D. bolivari* with some doubt.

33. *Diplacodes trivialis* (Rambur, 1842) [T, S]

34. *Hydrobasileus croceus* (Brauer, 1867) [*T]

35. *Lathrecista asiatica* (Fabricius, 1798) [T, S]

36. *Lyriothemis cleis* Brauer, 1868 [**T]
This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

37.*Neurothemis r. ramburii* (Brauer, 1866) [T, S, J]

38. *Neurothemis t. terminata* Ris, 1911 [T, S, J]

39. *Orchithemis pulcherrima* Brauer, 1878 [T, S] (Figure 26)
This species was recorded in Luzon, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sanga-Sanga islands (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997). It is very rare in the northern islands of the archipelago unlike in Tawi-Tawi where it is frequently encountered.

Figure 26. *Orchithemis pulcherrima.*

40. *Orthetrum chrysis* (Selys, 1891) [T]

41. *Orthetrum pruinosum clelia* (Selys, 1878) [T, S, J]

42. *Orthetrum sabina sabina* (Drury, 1770) [T, S, J]

43. *Orthetrum t. testaceum* (Burmeister, 1839) [T, S, J]

44. *Pantala flavescens* (Fabricius, 1798) [T, S, J]

45. *Potamarcha congener* (Rambur, 1842) [T, S]

Figure 27. ***Rhyothemis phyllis subphyllis.***

Figure 28. ***Rhyothemis regia regia*** **.**

46. *Raphismia bispina* (Hagen, 1867) [**T, **S]
    This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

47. *Rhodothemis rufa* (Rambur, 1842) [*T]

48. *Rhyothemis phyllis subphyllis* Selys, 1882 [T, S, J] (Figure 27)

49. *Rhyothemis regia regia* (Brauer, 1867) [*T, S] (Figure 28)

Figure 29. ***Rhyothemis triangularis.***

Figure 30. ***Tetrathemis i. irregularis.***

50. *Rhyothemis triangularis* Kirby, 1889 [T] (Figure 29)

51. *Tetrathemis i. irregularis* Brauer, 1868 [T, S] (Figure 30)

52. *Tholymis tillarga* (Fabricius, 1798) [*T, S, J]

53. *Tramea transmarina euryale* (Selys, 1878) [T, S]

54. *Trithemis festiva* (Rambur, 1842) [**T]
    This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

55. *Urothemis signata bisignata* Brauer, 1868 [**T]

    This species was previously recorded (Hämäläinen & Müller, 1997).

56. *Zyxomma obtusum* Albarda, 1881[*T] 1m 1f 1-14.viii.2011

57. *Zyxomma petiolatum* Rambur, 1842 [T]

58. Anisoptera sp. [T] (Figure 31)
    One large Anisoptera was seen and photographed. It was unfortunate that the photograph is blurred and no material was collected. Based on the photograph, it clearly resembles some member of Gomphidae, a family so far not recorded in the region.

Figure 31. Anisoptera sp.

Acknowledgement

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63	2010	Asmaa Hassan Jabr, Baghdad, Iraq	Providing odonatological literature to M.Sc. student Asmaa Hassan Jabr,Department of Biology, College of Education, (Ibn al-Haitham), Adhamiyah, Anter SQ, Baghdad – Iraq
64	2010	Kosterin, O.E., Russia	The Odonata of the Cardamon mountains in Cambodia – progress study November 2010
65	2010	Villanueva, Reagan, Philippinen	Fieldwork on dragonflies on Samar Island (Philippines)
66	2010	Villanueva, Reagan, Philippinen	Fieldwork at Balut/Saranggani (Philippines) and Talaud islands (Indonesia)
67	2010	Villanueva, Reagan, Philippinen	Endemic species of the Diomabok-Lake region south of Davao, The Philippines
68	2010	Graham Reels, Hong-Kong	African Odonata (Dijkstra & Clausnitzer, Eds) text edit
69	2011	Rory Dow, Niederlande	Expedition to the Odonata of the Hose Mts., Sarawak, Malaysia
70	2011	Dejan Kulijer, Bosia & Herzegovina	Odonata of the Livanjsko poljekarst wetland area, with special emphasis on Coenagrion ornatum
71	2011	Do Manh, Cuong, Hanoi, Vietnam	Study of Odonata in north central Vietnam
72	2011	Kosterin, O.E., Russia	The Odonata of the Cardamon mountains in Cambodia – progress study August 2011
73	2011	Villanueva, Reagan, Philippinen	Odonata of Tawi-Tawi-Island, The Philippines
74	2011	Elena Dyatlova, Ukraine	Odonata of Moldavia – progress study
75	2011	Zhang, Haomiao, Guangzhou, China	The Superfamily Calopterygoidea in South China: taxonomy and distribution III – Travelling grant to the Guizhou and Yunnan Provinces, Summer 2011
76	2011	Marinov, Milen, Christchurch, New Zealand	Odonata at artificial light sources – review paper
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78	2010	Villanueva, Reagan, Philippinen	Stereomikroskop
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82	2012	Dow, Rory, UK/The Netherlands	Odonata of Kalimantan, Borneo, Malaysia
83	2012	Marinov, Milen, Christchurch, New Zealand	Odonata species diversity of the "Eua Island, Kingdom of Tonga"
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