

A NOTE ON REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR
AND OVIPOSITION IN *LESTES DRYAS* KIRBY
(ZYGOPTERA: LESTIDAE)

On the 10th August 1996, I spent a day on Thompson Common (grid TL 934 967, E Norfolk, United Kingdom) among the dried out pingoes, studying the habits of *L. dryas*. During the spells of bright sunshine, there were good numbers of them flying around rather weakly, very low in and among the Greater Tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*). At times they would venture just above the tops of the plants, but only to move from one plant to another, or so it appeared. They remained in the area and rarely left the plants at all. When the sunshine disappeared, then so did they, almost dropping from sight low in among the stems of the plants and had I not watched certain individuals as they lowered themselves into the plants, I should not have known of their presence at all. There they remained unless disturbed. I was able to observe many pairs at their mating and see the females in tandem with the males, ovipositing into the stems and leaves of the Tussock-sedges. At times they remained in tandem, ovipositing for several minutes at a time. On many occasions, while the pair were so disposed, as many as four other males were attempting to mate with the already mating females, but usually the pair remained in tandem.

On occasions, when the female had concluded her oviposition, I kneeled down to examine the stems and leaves for evidence of the punctures in the leaves where the ovipositor of the female had inserted the eggs, much in the manner of *Lestes sponsa*. The pairs often moved from plant to plant, still in tandem, and laying eggs on each plant visited. It would be difficult to ascertain the numbers of eggs laid by a particular female, but I would suspect that the numbers would be large indeed, bearing in mind that these pairs remained in tandem sometimes for thirty minutes or more at a time and visited many plants during that time.

In most cases, the females did not insert her eggs

into the plant stems any lower than approximately fourteen inches above the dried out bottom of the pingo. This would suggest to me that she has her own opinion as to the eventual water level when water returns to the depression after rains.

Numbers at this site on this occasion were good, with many individuals on the wing and many mating pairs to be seen and the scarcity of the species was not evident. In Eastern Norfolk, *L. dryas* is an extremely rare species although possibly an overlooked species and careful searching should be undertaken in suitable habitats for its existence.

Despite the, at times, bright sunshine, the only other odonate species that I saw was *Sympetrum sanguineum*.

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