

**TRITHEMIS KIRBYI SELYS IN SOUTHERN SPAIN (ANISOPTERA: LIBELLULIDAE)**D. CHELMICK<sup>1</sup> and B.P. PICKESS<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> 31 High Beech Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SQ, United Kingdom; – dgc@davidchelmick.com<sup>2</sup> 8 Shaw Drive, Sandford, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 7BT, United Kingdom; – syldata@beeb.net

**Abstract** – The common African dragonfly, *T. kirbyi*, is recorded from southern Spain. As far as the authors can ascertain this is the first time this sp. has been observed in mainland Europe.

**Introduction**

D'AGUILAR et al. (1986) state that *Trithemis kirbyi* ssp. *ardens* occurs in Africa and reaches the Sahara and Morocco. The map in this latter reference shows that its range does not reach the North African coast except in the far east in Egypt. However, DIJKSTRA (2006), which gives the geographical range of *T. kirbyi* as Africa, Arabia and India, contains a distribution map showing that the insect now occurs on the North African coast immediately opposite Spain.

**Observations**

The Rio Manilva is a small river in Andalusia which rises near Casares in the Sierra Crestallina and reaches the sea approximately 50 km north east of Gibraltar. Between 29 May and 8 June 2007, the authors visited an area on this river near the town of Manilva known as the Hedionda. This roughly translates as the “stinking place” on account of the sulphur

springs which feed into the river and which have attracted people since Roman times for their alleged health improving qualities. A bath house which stores the sulphur infused water stands on the site and is in current use. On 29 May 2007 at about 11:00 hours, DGC recorded three males of this insect on the outfall stream from the bath house. Both authors revisited the site on 3 June 2007, on this occasion there was no sign of *T. kirbyi* at the baths but three males were present at around 12:30 hours on the river approximately 100 m to the south. We returned to the river at around 16:30 hours and again recorded 3 male insects. At this location the river is approximately 2.50 m wide with steep sided banks and a hard bottomed substrate covered in shallow mud. DGC walked along the bed of the river for approximately 100 m to the point where the bath outfall meets the river. DGC found exuviae of *Gomphus pulchellus* (1 No.), *Oxygastra curtisii* (2 No.) and *Platycnemis* sp. (2 No.). In addition, DGC observed a male *O. curtisii* holding territory along the river. Other species present as adults were *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*, *Erythromma lindeni*, *Platycnemis latipes*, *P. acutipennis*, *Ischnura graellsii*, *Anax imperator*, *Gomphus pulchellus*, *Onychogomphus forcipatus*, *Orthetrum chrysostigma* and

*Trithemis annulata*. In addition, *Aeshna mixta* (many juveniles) and *Boyeria irene* (1♂) were observed flying in the adjacent dry valley.

On each occasion, *T. kirbyi* was seen in association with *T. annulata*, indeed, at one point *T. kirbyi* and *T. annulata* were seen perched on the same bramble stem (*Rubus* sp.). Both species remained in the proximity of the river and perched frequently on the surrounding vegetation.

The final visit was made on 8 June 2007; we visited the baths and river locations in the morning and late afternoon but saw no sign of *T. kirbyi*. Indeed on this day there was very little odonate activity in the area although we did observe one male *T. annulata*.

The overall period of our visit to Andalucia covered 28 May to 8 June 2007. We visited a total of 14 localities ranging from Tarifa on the very southern tip of Spain up to the Laguna de la Fuente de la Piedra some 50 km north of Malaga. We made no observations of *T. kirbyi* at any of the locations apart from the Hedionda. We observed *T. annulata* at 4 localities in total.

#### Identification

Figures 1 & 2 show *T. kirbyi* as photographed by the authors. The extensive yellow patches on the wing bases together with the short black pterostigma are clearly shown. In Figure 2 it is just possible to see the deep groove in the frons.

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Figs 1-2. Selys: (1) showing the extensive wing bases and short black pterostigmas; – (2) the deeply cleft frons is just visible.

**References** – D'AGUILAR, J.-L. DOMMANGET & R. PRECHAC, 1986, *A field guide to the dragonflies of Britain, Europe and North Africa*, Collins, London; – DIJKSTRA, K.-D.B., 2006, *Field guide to the dragonflies of Britain and Europe*. British Wildlife Publishing, Gillingham.

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