

SIGHTING OF RUDDY MEADOW SKIMMER *NEUROTHEMIS INTERMEDIA* (RAMBUR, 1842) (INSECTA: ODONATA: LIBELLULIDAE) IN DELHI, INDIA

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The dragonfly, Ruddy Meadow Skimmer (Paddyfield Parasol) *Neurothemis intermedia* (Rambur, 1842) is widely distributed in India, Sri Lanka and many South-East Asian countries (Fraser, 1936; Subramanian, 2009; Singh, 2022). In India, it is found throughout peninsular India, Bengal, Assam, and Sikkim (Fraser, 1936; Subramanian, 2009). In northwest India, it has been reported from the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan (Singh, 2022). Despite its widespread occurrence in northwest India, it has not been reported from Delhi (Kumar, 1997; Singh, 2022). This dragonfly is usually found in grasslands, marshy vegetations near ponds and lakes, and paddy fields (Suri Babu, 2000; Subramanian, 2009; Singh, 2022). It is seen on the throughout the year except during winter months as long spells of cold temperature slow down the development of larval stage (Suri Babu, 2000).

Males of the Ruddy Meadow Skimmer have a bright red abdomen with brownish ventro-lateral stripes; rusty-brown thorax; transparent wings with an amber-yellow patch at the base of both the pairs of wings. Females are similar to males, but have more defined ventro-lateral abdominal markings; pale-yellow wings, and lack the amber-yellow patch at the

base (Fraser, 1936; Subramanian, 2009; Singh, 2022). An andromorphic form of female Ruddy Meadow Skimmer has been reported in one instance from central India (Prasad, 2000; Joshi *et al.*, 2020).

An individual of *Neurothemis intermedia* was observed in the residential area in northwest Delhi (28° 42' 30" N, 77° 07' 49" E) on 2nd August 2020, at 10:30 am. The dragonfly was roosting on a cable wire, and was photographed using digital SLR camera (Figure 1). The features of dragonfly notable from the photographs include-pale labrum, clypeus and frons; eyes - reddish-brown above and pale-grey below; thorax, rusty-brown and bright red abdomen with ventro-lateral blackish-brown stripes interrupted at apical end of the segments; both pairs of wings with amber-yellow base and dark reddish-brown pterostigma. These features are indicative of the individual being a male. However, it possessed female-like anal appendages (Figure 1C). Thus, the observed individual of Ruddy Meadow Skimmer was an andromorphic form of female.

The observed Ruddy Meadow Skimmer could be a vagrant to Delhi. It is also possible that the species is a resident of Delhi, and the observed individual has migrated into the residential area from its

nearby natural habitat (agricultural farms and water bodies).

This communication therefore reports the sighting of Ruddy Meadow Skimmer *Neurothemis intermedia* in Delhi for the first time. Also, the sighted individual was an andromorphic female, the occurrence of which, to the best of our knowledge, has been reported only once in the literature (Prasad, 2000; Joshi *et al.*, 2020).

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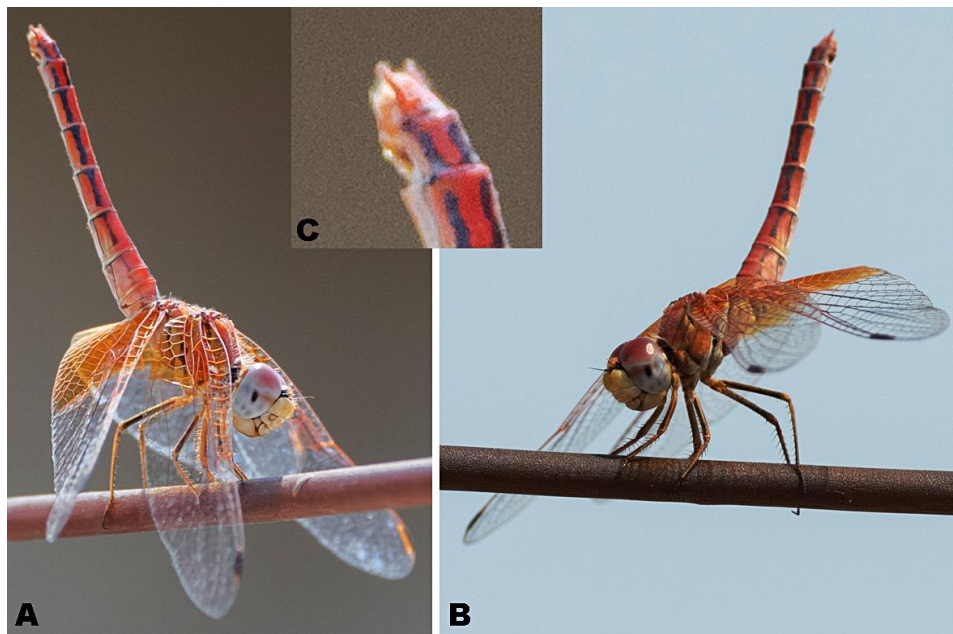


Figure 1: 'A' and 'B' photographs of Ruddy Meadow Skimmer *Neurothemis intermedia* as observed in Delhi; 'C' Close up of tip of the abdomen of same individual showing anal cerci.