

REPORT ON THE FAUNISTIC SURVEY (ODONATA) OF THE SOUTH ANDAMAN ISLANDS

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INTRODUCTION

The South Andaman group of islands is situated in between the Middle and Little Andamans in the bay of Bengal. The soil of these islands is mostly loamy clay, except along the shores, where it is sandy. The climate is hot and humid and the rainfall is fairly heavy (about 315 cm. annually). Both South-West (May-September) and North-East (October-December) monsoons occur in these islands.

Having such climatic features, these isolated islands, in the Bay of Bengal, have great economic and Zoogeographic importance. The Zoological Survey of India has conducted a number of surveys of these islands. Fraser (1924) worked out a small collection of Odonata made by Dr. A. Annandale in the year 1923 from Mt. Harriet, South Andaman islands. He reported eleven species including three new species and two new subspecies. These new species and subspecies were again referred to by Fraser in the Fauna of British India, Odonata (volumes 1-3, 1933-1936). The present observations are based on the works done by Fraser and the study of some of the later survey collections which have been worked out by Mrs. G. Chhotani (*nec* Bose), A. R. Lahiri and T. R. Mitra (Mss. stage), the account of which will be published elsewhere. Of these col. R.B.S. Sewell's collection in the year 1928 and Sri B. S. Lamba's collection in the year 1964 are of particular interest.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

G. Chhotani *et al* (Mss) have studied collections from 22 different localities from Baratang (12°12'N. and 92°52'E.) in the North to Macpherson strait (11°04'N. to 11°08'N. and 92°37'E. to 92°40'E.) in the South; this gives us a fair picture about the Odonate fauna of South Andamans. Thus, apart from eleven species and subspecies reported by Fraser (1924) twenty more have been found to inhabit these islands as follows:

Suborder I. ZYGOPTERA

Family 1. COENAGRIIDAE —12 species

Family 2. AGRIDAE — 3 species

Suborder II. *ANISOPTERA*Family 3. *AESHNIDAE* — 2 speciesFamily 4. *LIBELLULIDAE* — 14 species

The families Coenagriidae and Libellulidae are the more represented, occupying about 76% of the total number of species present.

Out of 31 species of Odonata occurring in S. Andamans, 5 species are endemic to these islands. Of the remaining ones, three are common with those found in India only; two of these are known to occur in Eastern India only and the other one is fairly distributed throughout the subcontinent. Four are common with those found in Ceylon and Southern India; 10 are common with those distributed all over the Southern Asia; and the rest of the species found in Andamans have a greater range of distribution, *i.e.*, from Africa in the Palaearctic region to Australia through the Oriental region.

This data suggest the existence of a remote land connection between these islands and different parts of the Oriental lands, whereby many of these species got distributed in these islands. During the course of their separate existence over a long period of time, from the cretaceous period, as suggested by Karunakaran (1962) the odonate fauna of these islands have aquired some variations, as a result of which the endemic species have arisen. It is interesting to note that the species do not show any remarkable degree of variation from their representatives found elsewhere. It is expected that some more species of odonata, as well as other facts regarding the species already reported may come to light, if more surveys of these islands are conducted.

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