

# Bugs & All

Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Newsletter of the  
Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

## Communal roost of Yellow-tailed Ashy Skimmer at Kamrup District, Assam

A communal roost of Yellow-tailed Ashy Skimmer *Potamarcha congener* Rambur, 1842 dragonfly (Family Libellulidae) was recorded at Rani (26.00°N & 91.54°E), Kamrup District in Assam. The roost was observed from 15 November 2020 for 32 days, until it was abandoned naturally on 18 December 2021.

The roost was on branches of a *Ficus* sp. plant growing on an old huge Sal tree *Shorea robusta*. The tree was about 60 meters from a perennial water body used for fishery. The dragonflies preferred two leafless branches at the heights of three and four meters from the ground. The maximum count of the dragonflies was about 125, while on an average 47 individuals were seen (n= 32).

The photographs revealed dominance of females (70%) in the roosts. In this species, the male appears bluish-



**The large gathering of *Potamarcha congener* at Rani, Assam. © Sachin Ranade.**

grey in colour while female is yellowish (Subramanian 2005). Generally, the dragonflies started gathering by 1530 h and left the roost by 0800 h, but on a foggy day, a few individuals stayed throughout the day on the same twig.

A roost of the same species on the Indian gooseberry tree *Phyllanthus emblica* was observed at Rajabhatkhwa in Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal during November 2010 for a couple of days.

The communal roost is assumed to serve as (a) a breeding facilitator, (b) as a preparation of gregarious emigration, and (c) an antipredator response (Miller 1989; May 2013). There are a few records of the roost of the species from peninsular India from Madurai, Tamil Nadu (Miller 1989), Gaganbawada, Maharashtra (Mahabal & Rane 2012) and on the website Odonata of India (Anonymous 2021). Miller (1989) had monitored nine roosts, some of them

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Close up of dragonflies roosting. © Sachin Ranade.

**Table 1: Communal roost of *Potamarcha congener* reported from India (Source: Odonata of India).**

Date	Place	District	State	Observer
20.iv.2013	Ruppur	Nadia	W Bengal	Somen Sarkar
05.v.2016	Thumboor	Thrissur	Kerala	Rison Thumboor
11.i.2018	Thakurli	Thane	Maharashtra	Omkar Damle
15.xi.2020	Rani	Kamrup	Assam	Sachin Ranade

utilized for even 70 days, but none of the marked individuals used the same roost for more than 23 days. The observations made here appear similar for roosting duration and habitat to those by Miler 1989, although the individuals were not marked, neither intensive observations were carried out. The photographic records from the 'Odonata of India' are compiled in Table 1

(Anonymous 2021). My observations appear to be the first record of communal roost from northeast India.

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