

## Two New UAE Damselflies: *Ceriagrion glabrum* and *Pseudagrion decorum*

In **Tribulus 8.2** (Winter 1998) Graham Giles published an illustrated and annotated checklist of the Odonata (dragonfly and damselfly) species known to occur in the UAE [1]. In his notes he speculated that additional species would no doubt be found, and he predicted the occurrence of at least one likely candidate.

Consistent with that prediction, *Ceriagrion glabrum*, a small but striking red and yellow damselfly with bright green eyes, was observed in March 1999 by Stephen Green and the author at the Wadi Qawr dam. This unmistakable damselfly is known from Oman and had been previously recorded by Giles and by Dr. Michael Gillett at Omani mountain front plantation sites near Al Ain, including Aboule, Musah and Khatwah. A photograph accompanied the UAE checklist. In Wadi Qawr it was seen among thick dead reeds beside water ponded in silt behind the now-breached earthen dam. This habitat differs from the rocky wadi environment described for it in *Insects of Eastern Arabia* [4], but is consistent with Giles' advice to look for it among dead reeds. This habitat may account for its otherwise conspicuous colouration.

The same observers also documented the existence at the Wadi Qawr dam site of a second species of damselfly new to the UAE. Giles has examined photographs and agrees that this is a damselfly that he saw and photographed in Oman, which he identifies as *Pseudagrion decorum*. Descriptive notes for the species are included in Schneider (1988) [2]. It is common in the Indian subcontinent and Burma [5] and is now also recognized throughout the Sultanate [3]. *P. decorum* has a bright blue-green head and thorax, a bright blue ventral stripe along the otherwise dark abdomen, and two closely-spaced, bright blue rings near the tip of the

abdomen. It should be distinguished from both the endemic and uniformly coloured "powder blue damselfly" *Arabicnemis caerulea* and the similar-looking but shorter male of the "blue-banded Ischnura" *Ischnura evansi*, which has only a single blue band on the relatively enlarged tip of its abdomen. *P. decorum* has since been observed near plantations in Wadi Maydaq, near Masafi. It was common at Wadi Qawr and at both sites it typically perched low on emergent vegetation.

### References

1. Giles, G. (1998). "An Illustrated and Annotated Checklist of the Dragonflies of the UAE", *Tribulus*: 8.2.
2. Schneider, W. (1988). "Odonata of the Wahiba Sands and adjacent areas, Eastern Oman", *Journal of Oman Studies*, Special Report No. 3.
3. Schneider, W. and Dumont, H.J. (1997). "The dragonflies and damselflies (Insecta: Odonata) of Oman. An updated and annotated checklist", *Fauna of Saudi Arabia*, vol. 16.
4. Walker, D.H. and Pittaway, A.R. (1987). *Insects of Eastern Arabia*, Macmillan.
5. Waterston, A.R. and Pittaway, A.R. (1989). "The Odonata or Dragonflies of Oman and neighbouring territories", *Journal of Oman Studies*, Vol. 10.

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*Pseudagrion decorum*



*Ceriagrion glabrum*