

Odonata of the Pacific islands - a contemporary story for enthusiastic treasure hunters

Milen Marinov *1

¹ University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, NZ

Odonata fauna of the Pacific islands is largely inconsistently studied. Marginal island groups, like Hawaii, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand are the most thoroughly investigated with research started in mid-eighteen century. Studies on Odonata of New Caledonia and island of the Fijian archipelago began around the same time, but there were large gaps during decades with no information. Other island groups, like Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, Wallis & Futuna, Tuvalu, Niue, Easter Islands and the whole Micronesia are poorly known in terms of their Odonata fauna. They have been either: a) overviewed for the whole region with little attention to regional studies, b) investigated more than 80 years ago, c) included in research performed for neighbouring regions, or d) not investigated at all. Pacific islands in the present study were investigated as one large geographic unit. A database was initiated to harbour everything compiled so far from literature, museum specimens and recent field studies. It provides the most updated information about Odonata species distribution, flying periods and habitat preferences over this enormous region. Total of 7,903 entries collected so far comprise roughly about 60% of the expected data. The information will be then included in a large scale GIS based spatial analysis, which will elucidate priority areas for future studies on Odonata from regions that have never been studied or are difficult to access. Here the first data are reported with habitat models prepared for the New Zealand species. Some advantages and drawbacks of this method are considered during the model testing and discussed in details as well.

