

Book Review

The Dragonflies & Damselflies of Trinidad & Tobago

by John Michalski

The Dragonflies & Damselflies of Trinidad & Tobago is a comprehensive and relatively easy to use guide dedicated to the Odonatan fauna of Trinidad & Tobago. It is the product of several years of hard work and dedication to the study of the fauna of these islands by John Michalski and contains enough information to allow for identification to the species level. Accounts of all 121 species of Odonata that inhabit the islands are given, along with brief defining characteristics. From personal experience it has proven to be an invaluable resource in the identification of dragonflies and damselflies of these islands, both in and out of the field.

This book is suited for use by both the casual naturalist and professional entomologist alike, containing a rigorous level of scientific and technical detail that is presented in a clear and concise manner. Additionally, the inclusion of both common and scientific names in the text will make it significantly easier for readers to achieve a degree of familiarity with this group of insects. Each species entry is supplemented by colour photographs as well as detailed keys to aid in their identification. Photographic comparisons along with excellent hints for distinguishing similar species aid in the identification of very similar looking species, a feature most welcome by anyone studying or working with Neotropical Odonata fauna.

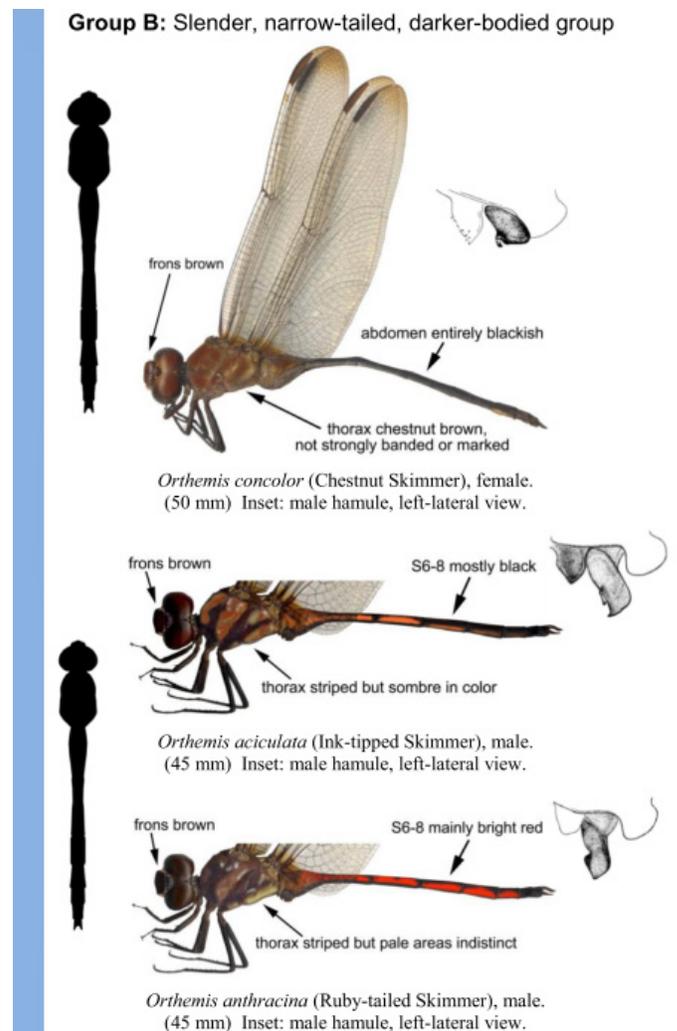
The descriptions, and other parts of the species accounts are well written, very helpful and interesting. The introductory sections on morphology, general biology and history of Odonatology in Trinidad and Tobago is very concise and engaging. Particular focus was paid to key Odonate habitats in Trinidad and Tobago, a section that I particularly favoured as one can know what groups to potentially expect when visiting various habitat types throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There is also a section highlighting suggested areas for future study.

This book follows in the legacy of his earlier work, a catalogue titled: A Catalogue and Guide to the Dragonflies of Trinidad (Order Odonata), published by the Zoology Department of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus (Occasional Papers No. 6, 1988). That catalogue was the last comprehensive work done on this subject since that of D. C Geijskes in 1932, it however lacked many of the key features of his current manual such as colour photographs, common names, and the general user friendliness that this current book provides and was probably best suited for a scientific audience. In the context

of specimen identification and faunistics, this current book is undoubtedly the most significant contribution in almost three decades and it is recommended to anyone wanting to know more about the dragonfly and damselfly fauna of Trinidad and Tobago.

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