

## DRAGONFLIES (continued)



● ***Brachydiplax chalybea* | Blue Dasher | Family: Libellulidae**

Male powdery blue with abdomen tipped black and side of thorax marked brown. Female orange-brown with dark markings, lacking the dark wing bases of males. Males territorial, flying fast and sometimes hovering. Prefers ponds with reeds, lilies or other water plants. Common in FRIM and the botanic gardens.

● ***Acisoma panorpoides* | Grizzled Pintail | Family: Libellulidae**

Upper half of abdomen expanded. Male black with intricate light blue markings and bright blue eyes. Females with the markings and eyes green. Inconspicuous in habits but common around grassy and marshy edges of many ponds in the FRIM grounds and botanic gardens.



● ***Rhodothemis rufa* | Spine-legged Redbolt | Family: Libellulidae**



Eyes meet only narrowly at top of head. Male all deep red with the upper body brighter red. Female brown with thorax dark, and with a contrasting light yellow streak from behind head to mid abdomen. Fast-flying, perching on low vegetation near ponds. Can be locally abundant, but is uncommon in FRIM, occurring at the pond near the FRIM mosque.

## WHERE TO WATCH DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES IN FRIM

A good place to begin watching dragonflies and damselflies is at a pond. Many species fly along the grassy verges of ponds in the grounds of FRIM and the Kepong Botanic Gardens. The two largest ponds in the botanic gardens and the lily pond are rich in species as are also the ponds beside the FRIM Mosque and the Visitor Information Centre. The Wetland area is also a good watching ground. Different species prefer different habitats, and so a variety of species can be seen when watching at different lakes and ponds. Species that like fast-flowing water can be found at the FRIM waterfall and picnic area. Along forest trails such as the Rover Track and Perah Camp trails, some dragonflies can be seen at puddles, while both dragonflies and damselflies can be seen beside the many streams that cross the paths. Species that breed in tree holes and among the leaves of plants that capture and hold water are more likely to be seen along the trail to Taman Bidara.

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● ***Pseudothemis jorina* | Banded Skimmer | Family: Libellulidae**

Black-brown with a distinctive white band around the base of the abdomen. Males fly fast along the contours of ponds, keeping close to the water surface, but may fly further across the water when engaging in territorial pursuits. Scarce and local around larger ponds and lakes in the FRIM grounds and botanic gardens.

● ***Neurothemis fluctuans* | Common Parasol | Family: Libellulidae**

Wings broadly red-brown in male. Wing tips and lower margin of hindwing clear. Body rusty brown, with abdomen reddened to varying degrees and marked with black dashes. Female browner with clear wings. Flies in open areas near forest wherever there are marshy puddles and slow-moving streams. Common in FRIM and the botanic gardens.



● ***Brachythemis contaminata* | Asian Amberwing | Family: Libellulidae**

Male orange-brown with a light brown tint on the basal two thirds of the wings, which fades towards the wing bases. Abdomen with a black mid-line. Female greyer and without wing markings. Keeps to the edges of ponds, landing on twigs and reeds. Locally common in the botanic gardens.



● ***Trithemis aurora* | Crimson Marsh Glider | Family: Libellulidae**

Male purplish red with wing veins reddened and wing bases darkened. Female yellowish brown with black tiger-stripe markings. Immature male somewhat resembles female in colour. A sun-loving dragonfly that is common around the grassy edges of larger ponds. Common in the Kepong Botanic Gardens.



● ***Camacinia gigantea* | Sultan | Family: Libellulidae**

Very large, with a dark red-brown male that has the outer third of its wings clear. Female lighter brown with an amber instead of red-brown wing tint and dark patches on the hindwing. Males perch on twigs around ponds and defend their territory against other dragonflies. Rare and only occasionally seen near forested ponds in the FRIM grounds.

● ***Rhyothemis triangularis* | Sapphire Flutterer | Family: Libellulidae**

Body and wing bases dark, metallic ultramarine blue. Hindwing more broadly blue than forewing. Male with a brighter hindwing patch than female. Flies fast, darting from one spot to another. Males like to hover, showing their glittering, metallic ultramarine sheen in the sunlight. Found around lily ponds and other well-vegetated ponds in FRIM and the botanic gardens.



● ***Urothemis signata* | Scarlet Basker | Family: Libellulidae**



Male with body nearly all scarlet and with wing veins slightly reddened. Wings with dark patch at base. Female brown with paler wing patch. A sun-loving dragonfly that often lands with its abdomen raised. Occurs at some of the ponds in FRIM but is uncommon.

● ***Aethriamanta gracilis* | Pond Adjutant | Family: Libellulidae**

Male pale powdery blue with a black-tipped abdomen. Differs from other similarly coloured dragonflies by its smaller size and bigger cells between the wing veins. Female brown and black. Males fly fast, resting on vegetation at the edges of ponds. Common where it occurs in FRIM.



# Dragonflies and Damselflies of FRIM



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Dragonflies and damselflies (insects of the order Odonata) are without doubt some of the most beautiful day-flying creatures in the insect kingdom. Their behaviour is also fascinating. Among the fastest and most skillful aerial acrobats, they can hover and fly extremely fast, changing direction in an instant. They are often found around water bodies in which their immature stages develop, preying on aquatic life like mosquito larvae and small tadpoles. They can be good bioindicators of water quality. Some species only live in clean water, while others tolerate polluted water. Adults prey on small insects and are part of the food chain themselves, becoming food for larger animals like birds, fishes and frogs. They are most easily seen from mid-morning to early evening, but many species are active till even later. Some species of dragonflies are only active at dawn and dusk or when light levels in the forest are low. Twenty six species are illustrated in this pamphlet, which is only a fraction of the species that occur in the main FRIM grounds and the Kepong Botanic Gardens. The most commonly encountered have been featured to make this pamphlet a good introductory guide to identifying dragonflies and damselflies that can be seen in FRIM.

## DAMSELFLIES (SUBORDER ZYGOPTERA)



Male

- ***Vestalis amoena* | Charming Flashwing | Family: Calopterygidae**

Moderately large and metallic green with a purplish sheen on its wings. Perches on top of leaves along forest paths, flying when disturbed. A few individuals may be seen near each other. Common

and conspicuous along many trails in FRIM. The Common Flashwing (*Vestalis amethystina*) is very similar and more common in FRIM.



Female

- ***Heliocypha biforata* | Magenta-backed Jewel | Family: Chlorocyphidae**

Male mainly black with light blue markings and black wing tips, but with a tiny pink triangle on the top of the thorax and a diagnostic pair of pale lilac markings to the side of it. The colourful spots and stripes are replaced by yellowish green lines and streaks in females, and their wings lack black tips. Inhabits fast-flowing streams in the forest, flying low and perching on boulders or low vegetation but sometimes flying higher. Common in parts of the FRIM waterfall.



Male

- ***Lestes praemorsus* | Crenulated Spreadwing | Family: Lestidae**

Eyes all blue, and thorax light powdery blue with black spots and streaks. Abdomen bluish white and black. Keeps to grassy edges of ponds, landing with wings spread. Occurs in localised areas of some of the ponds in the Kepong Botanic Gardens.



Male



Male

Female

- ***Drepanosticta fontinalis* | Spring Shadowdamsel | Family: Platystictidae**

Body long and very dark, with a metallic green sheen and pale markings on the thorax. Abdomen with brown bands and, in the male, a light blue tip. Perches in shady areas near small streams. Inhabits some of the small streams along the Rover Track.



Male

Female

- ***Pseudocopteryx ciliata* | Light Blue Featherlegs | Family: Platycnemididae**



Male

Male black with greenish white body stripes and abdominal tip. Legs mainly white. Female with black areas browner. Flies low and lands among grasses at the marshy edges of ponds. Common around ponds and wetlands in the FRIM grounds and Kepong Botanic Gardens.



Male

- ***Prodasineura laidlawii* | Laidlaw's Threadtail | Family: Platycnemididae**

Black with narrow blue stripes on the thorax and a blue-tipped, long, slender abdomen. Delicate and inconspicuous, inhabiting shady areas in the FRIM wetlands and along streams beside the Rover Track.



Female

- ***Onychargia atrocyana* | Marsh Dancer | Family: Platycnemididae**

Small, with a very dark blue to almost black male. Female black with yellow stripes on the thorax. Often remains very still among grasses. Common at the edges of ponds and in marshy areas in the Kepong Botanic Gardens.



Male

## DRAGONFLIES (SUBORDER ANISOPTERA) (continued overleaf)



Male

- ***Ictinogomphus decoratus* | Common Flangetail | Family: Gomphidae**

Large, black, with green thoracic bands and dull yellow abdominal spots. Female similar to male. Abdomen of male expands near the tip and has a conspicuous pair of lobes. Fast-flying over water and grassy areas, especially around ponds, often perching on exposed twigs or reeds. Can be locally common, although in FRIM it is only occasionally seen in the Kepong Botanic Gardens.



Female

- ***Macrogomphus quadratus* | Yellow-banded Forktail | Family: Gomphidae**

Very large. Male with green thoracic markings and orange-yellow abdominal bands. Female with thoracic markings bright yellow. Flies swiftly, landing on exposed twigs and plant stems. An uncommon species that is sometimes seen along the Rover Track near slow-flowing streams.



Male

- ***Lathrecista asiatica* | Scarlet Grenadier | Family: Libellulidae**

Male with a brown and dull green shiny thorax and a bright red abdomen that is black tipped. Female with abdomen brown. Fast-flying, inhabiting the forest edge wherever there are slow moving streams and seepages. Males perch on the tips of plant stems. Common in some areas in FRIM, especially in the Kepong Botanic Gardens.



Male

- ***Cratilla metallica* | Dark-tipped Forest Skimmer | Family: Libellulidae**

Body metallic blue-green with fine yellow markings. Wing-tips black. Male with part of the abdomen banded powdery blue. Flies fast and perches on plant stems and twigs. Males engage in territorial pursuits of each other. Males are common along wide forest paths in FRIM, especially around large puddles.

- ***Orthetrum sabina* | Variegated Green Skimmer | Family: Libellulidae**

Slender in build. Thorax black with numerous green stripes. Abdomen black with white-tip and incomplete white bands. Male and female similar. A fast and strong flier, and a ferocious predator of smaller insects. Common in some marshy areas around ponds and streams in FRIM and the botanic gardens.



Male

- ***Orthetrum chrysis* | Crimson-tailed Marsh Hawk | Family: Libellulidae**

Eyes green-brown and thorax all brown. Abdomen bright red in males, dull orange-brown in females. Fast-flying around standing or flowing water, including puddles, in many habitats. Males are common in FRIM and the Kepong Botanic Gardens. The male of the equally common Orange Skimmer (*Orthetrum testaceum*) has the top of the thorax orange-red and is found in similar habitats.



Male



Immature male

- ***Orthetrum luzonicum* | Tricoloured Marsh Hawk | Family: Libellulidae**

Male with black-tipped, powdery blue abdomen and without dark wing bases. Thorax of male wholly dark, powdery blue when mature but striped yellow-green when immature. Eyes green. Female yellow-brown with dark frontal stripes on the thorax. Fast flying, perching on low vegetation around open streams, marshes and ponds. Common in parts of FRIM but never abundant.