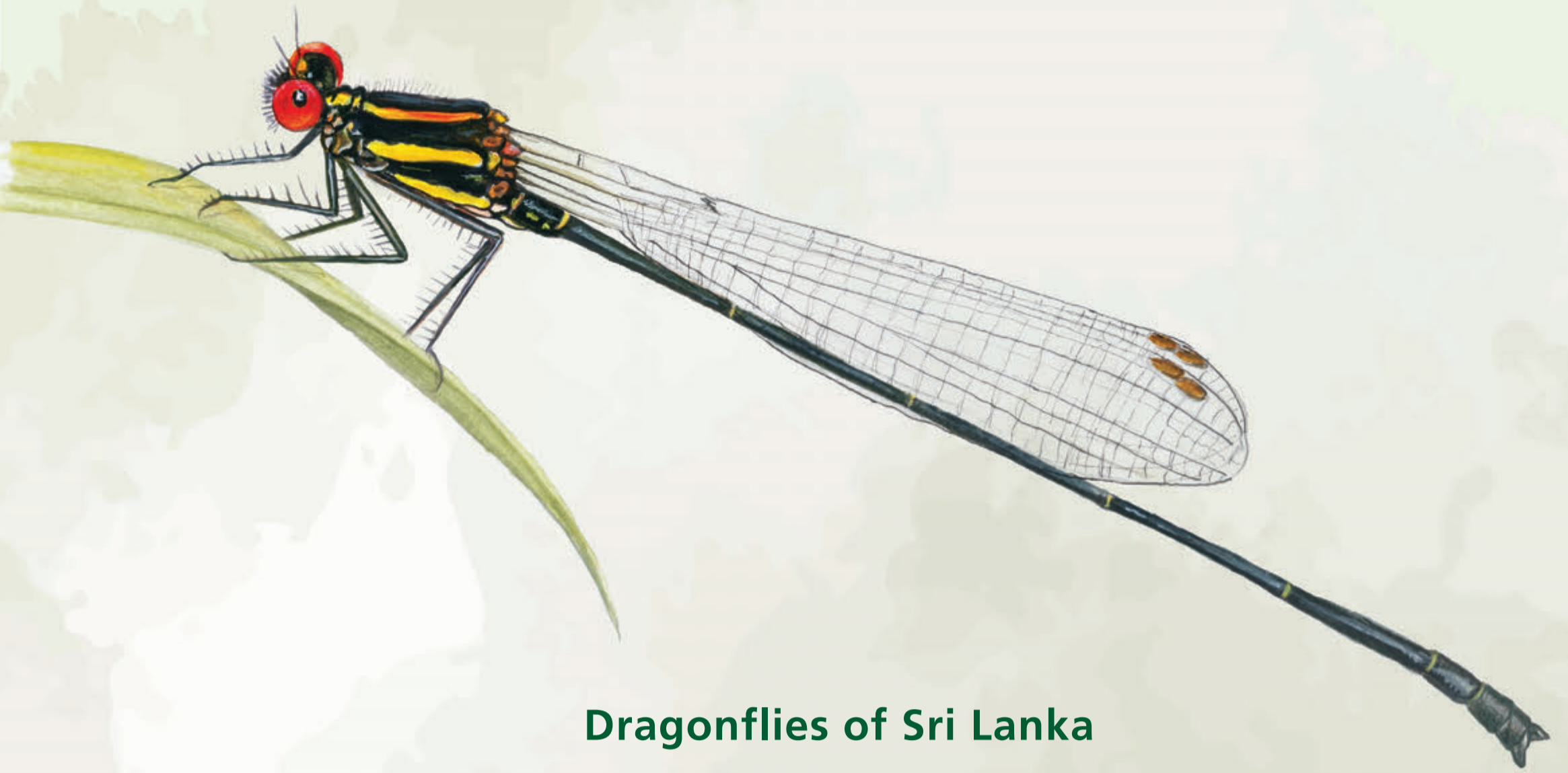


# 2025



## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka

Dragonflies, a group of fascinating insects in the order Odonata, are generally familiar to the wider public due to their colorfulness, relatively large size compared to most other insects, flight capabilities and presence around human modified landscapes. Even though commonly referred to as 'dragonflies' order Odonata include two suborders; the dragonflies of suborder Anisoptera and the damselflies of suborder Zygoptera. These suborders are different from each other in multiple characteristics including the general body shape. These insects have an amphibious life cycle consisting of three life stages; the egg, larvae and the adult. The larvae are exclusively aquatic while the adults are terrestrial insects capable of flight.

There are over 6400 known species of dragonflies around the world at present and many more species are discovered every year. Sri Lanka has 132 species of dragonflies as of 2024. Among the reported diversity of Sri Lankan dragonflies, 59 species and an additional eight subspecies are endemic to the country, indicating 51% total endemism.

Dragonflies are found throughout the country from the coastal belt to the mountain peaks. However, the highest diversity and the highest endemism is reported in association with wet zone rain forest habitats and lower montane forests.

Being carnivorous animals, both larvae and adult dragonflies act as apex predators among the invertebrate communities in their habitats and thus they maintain the population of other insects including economically harmful species such as pests and disease vectors. Dragonflies are also considered as among the top indicator species in aquatic habitats. The presence of some species of dragonflies in a habitat provides hints on the water quality and the overall health of the ecosystem. This has led dragonflies to be recognized as 'Guardians of the Watersheds' across the globe and considered as a flagship group of insects in the conservation movement.

For the past 19 years, SLT-MOBITEL has proudly celebrated the beauty and richness of Sri Lankan nature and culture through our annual calendar. Continuing this tradition, we are excited to present the theme for 2025: Dragonflies of Sri Lanka. The theme symbolizes a commitment to highlighting the intrinsic value of our natural heritage, focusing on vibrant life forms that enrich the environment. Through diverse artistic expressions, we aim to inspire a deeper appreciation and sense of responsibility towards preserving this unique aspect of Sri Lanka's environment. The project reaffirms our dedication to creating awareness and a lasting connection with nature. We look forward to sharing the captivating story of dragonflies with you in 2025.

Cover story - Red-striped Threadtail (*Elatoneura tenax*) - Artist: Parami Vidyarathna

This medium sized damselfly is easily recognizable by its unique red eyes and reddish orange stripes on its thorax. Known habitats are the lowland rainforests to the upper mountain forests in the wet and intermediate zones, while it is most commonly observed in mid-montane elevations. It is an endemic species unmistakable among all Sri Lankan damselflies due to its unique colour pattern.

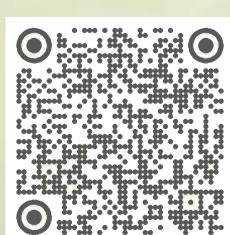
Resource Person: Mr. Amila Prasanna Sumanapala,  
Field Researcher, Department of Zoology and Environment Sciences, University of Colombo.  
Member of the IUCN SSC Dragonfly Specialist Group (2021–2025)  
Tamil Common Name Nomenclature: Prof. Gajapathy Kanapathy,  
Department of Zoology, University of Jaffna.

Artists:

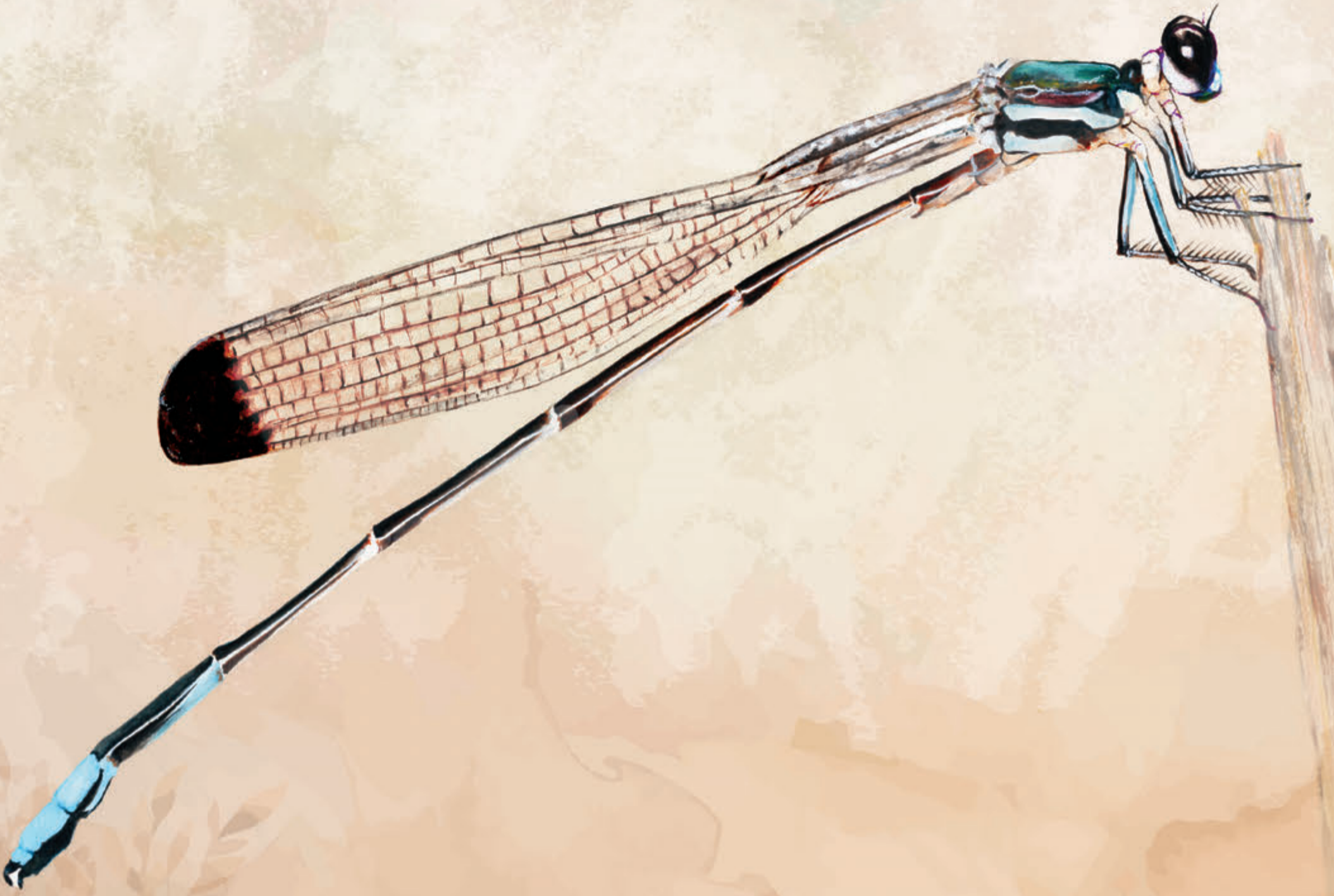
Pulasthi Ediriweera, Parami Vidyarathna, Udeshika Priyadarshani

Design: Sanjeevan Sathyajith

Published by: Marketing Group, SLT-MOBITEL



## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Dark Forest Damsel

*Platysticta apicalis*

(අඳුරු මහ-වන-ඉරටිකුරා - கரு வன ஊசித்தும்பி)

# 2025

## January

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	*14†	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

About two and a half inches in length, Dark Forest Damsel is among the largest damselflies in the country. This forest dwelling species represents the Platystictidae family, the damselfly family with the highest number of species in Sri Lanka. All Sri Lankan Platystictidae species are endemic and only seen in rain forests, sub-montane and montane cloud forests, and densely vegetated home gardens with closed canopies. These generally dark coloured damselflies always have a blue tip on their abdomen which is visible in the shady habitats they inhabit. The Dark Forest Damsel is present throughout the lowland and foothills in the wet zone and is generally observed perching on vegetation about a meter from the ground. The female is smaller and lays eggs inside soft plant stems close to streams.

Artist: Udeshika Priyadarshani



\* Public Holiday † Bank Holiday ‡ Mercantile Holiday ● Poya Day

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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Flint's Cruiser

*Macromia flinti*

(මලික්ඛීචේ අඳුරු-නිලන ඔත්කුරා - පිළිඹිට්ටුන් උලොකක් කරුමුත්තම්පි)

This enigmatic species of dragonfly was first discovered based on a specimen collected in 1970. No other records were known of the species for five decades that followed until it was rediscovered based on a field observation and multiple photographic records. Recent findings revealed that Flint's Cruiser has a fairly widespread distribution in the lowland wet zone and foothills where they occupy large streams and rivulets with dense riparian vegetation, often in forested areas. It is a large species with the total length of about three inches. Males generally fly along the streams, especially during the morning and evening. At mid-day they usually rest by hanging below vegetation in a well shaded place. It is endemic to the country and recognized as a species with high conservation importance.

Artist: Udeshika Priyadarshani

# 2025

## February

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	*4‡	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	*26	27	28		



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Green's Gem

*Libellago greeni*

(රන් මිනි-ඉරට්කුරා - செவ்வயிற்று ஊசித்தும்பி)

# 2025

## March

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
*31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

This colourful damselfly is one of the smallest of its kind, with only about an inch in total length. It represents the Chlorocyphidae family which is unique among all Sri Lankan damselflies for having wings longer than their abdomens. The strikingly colourful Green's Gem is often seen sitting on rocks emerging from water or vegetation close to the water surface along large streams, and rivers where riparian vegetation is present. They are distributed in the lowlands and lower hills in wet and intermediate zones. The males species hold a territory and engages in territorial battles with any rival male by flying rhythmically while facing its opponent. It is an endemic species easily recognizable due to the unique colour pattern of the male.

Artist: Parami Vidyaratna



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Asian Groundling

*Brachythemis contaminata*

(සුලබ තැඹිලිවන් ඛත්කුරා - செம்மஞ்சள் செட்டைத் தூம்பி)

# 2025

## April

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	*13‡
*14‡	+15	16	17	*18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

This orange coloured, small species is probably one of the most common dragonflies around the lowlands. Its characteristic wing colour and pattern allows it to be distinguished from all other Sri Lankan species. Females are more yellowish in colour with less colourful wings. It is a very common inhabitant in tanks, paddy fields, wetlands, lagoons and similar open water habitats where they are often seen in dozens. This generalist species can breed even in polluted canals, and water bodies of highly human modified landscapes such as cities and industrial areas. Their broad habitat use allows them to occupy a wide range of habitats and distribute throughout the country except for close-canopy forest habitats and upper mountains. It also has a wide distribution in South and Southeast Asia.

Artist: Pulasthi Ediriweera



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Vermilion Forester

*Lyriothemis defonsekai*

(රත් උළුර වන-බත්කුරා - செவ்வயிற்று வனத் தும்பி)

# 2025

## May

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			*1‡	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	*13‡	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

A brightly coloured, medium sized dragonfly that was discovered recently in Sri Lanka. It was originally reported from the Sinharaja forest Reserve and during later years it was also observed from several other lowland rainforest habitats in the southwestern wet zone of the country. The species is easily distinguishable from all other Sri Lankan dragonflies based on its colour patterns and body shape. It is generally found in association with marshy areas in rainforests where adults are seen perched on exposed vegetation from about a meter above the ground. The exact breeding habitat of the species is yet unknown. Despite continuous observations of the species during the past fifteen years, the knowledge of its biology remains largely unknown. It is also an endemic species recognized for its high conservation importance.

Artist: Pulasthi Ediriweera



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The Connection

## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Wall's Grappletail

*Heliogomphus walli*

(සුලබ කොකු-අභිසැති ඩන්කුරා - இறுகப்பற்றும் வால் தும்பி)

# 2025

## June

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	*7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

This medium sized endemic species belongs to the Gomphidae family. All members of Gomphidae in Sri Lanka are black in colour with pale yellowish or greenish markings. They are also unique among other dragonflies because their compound eyes have a gap between them unlike most other dragonfly families. Wall's Grappletail is generally a forest dwelling species that inhabits lowland rainforests, submontane forests and adjoining habitats with dense canopy cover. Males are often encountered perched on boulders along streams or riparian vegetation where they maintain territories. Females are usually observed at streams during mating and egg laying or resting in adjoining vegetation. It is one of the fairly common endemics distributed in the wet zone and some parts of the intermediate zone.

Artist: Parami Vidyaratna



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Fiery Emperor

*Anax immaculifrons*

(අග්නි රාජ-චන්ද්‍ර - நெருப்பு வயிற்றுப் பேரரசன் தும்பி)

# 2025

## July

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

This species is among the largest dragonflies in the country with the total body length over three inches. They are fast and strong fliers who are often seen flying around their habitats. Fiery Emperor inhabits large streams and rivers in the mountains. During the day they are almost always seen on wings and rarely encountered hanging below vegetation close to the streams. Unlike most dragonflies, the members of the Aeshnidae family, to which the Fiery Emperor belongs, usually lays eggs inside submerged plant tissues using a spine-like ovipositor. Females can be seen perched on vegetation with their abdomen tips underwater during this process. Fiery Emperor is a widespread species distributed in Asia and some parts of Europe but in Sri Lanka, it is restricted to the highlands.

Artist: Pulasthi Ediriweera



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Black-tipped Flashwing

*Vestalis nigrescens*

(තවු-අඹිස් කලු පිලිසි-ඉරවකුරා - கரு நுளி இறக்கை ஊசித்தும்பி)

# 2025

## August

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

This metallic green damselfly is one of the largest damselflies in the country. With the total length around three inches, it is unmistakable among Sri Lankan damselflies due to its colour, size and relatively broader wings with prominent black wingtips seen in males. They also have long legs compared to their body size. Distributed in lowlands and lower montane zone of both wet and intermediate climatic zones in the country, it is often seen perched on vegetation along stream and river banks. Multiple individuals of both sexes are usually encountered together in the same habitat and immature individuals are found around forest gaps away from streams. Females lay their eggs inside riparian vegetation overhanging the waterways. It is one of the most commonly encountered endemic damselflies in the country.

Artist: Pulasthi Ediriweera



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Sri Lanka Emerald Spreadwing

*Sinhalestes orientalis*

(ඉන්දීය විවරතටු-ඉරටුකුරු - திறந்த செட்டை மரகத ஊசித்தும்பி)

## 2025 September

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	*5‡	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

This enchanting beauty is a unique species among all damselflies in the world since it is the sole representative of the genus *Sinhalestes*. First discovered in 1859, it was once thought to be extinct due to the lack of any reliable records for over a century and a half until it was rediscovered from the enigmatic Samanala Adawiya mountains. Distributed only in the close-canopy forests in the mountains above 900 meters of elevation, it is rarely seen even in its habitat. The males are observed hanging down from vegetation about 2 meters from the ground close to sun-lit spots along large streams while females are seldom seen. It is an endemic species with high conservation priority due to its uniqueness and rarity.

Artist: Udeshika Priyadarshani



\* Public Holiday † Bank Holiday ‡ Mercantile Holiday ● Poya Day

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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



# 2025

# October

**Yerbury's Elf**  
*Tetrathemis yerburi*  
 (කුඩා නිල්-අස් ඇති ඔත්තූරා - சிறு நீலக் கண் தும்பி)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
*20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

This is one of the smallest dragonflies of the country with a body length of about an inch. It is a species associated with small pools in close-canopy rainforests in the wet zone. Males are often seen in such habitats. They are also found in water wells and ponds covered in ferns and other aquatic vegetation and thus they can also be seen in well vegetated home gardens with suitable stagnant water source. Yerbury's Elf has a unique breeding behavior compared to all other Sri Lankan dragonflies. During egg laying, the female attaches the eggs to a leaf, a stem or some other part of vegetation above a pool. The eggs remain exposed to the atmosphere until they hatch and the larvae drops to the pool below.

Artist: Pulasthi Ediriweera



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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Shinning Gossamerwing

*Euphaea splendens*

(අඳුරු හිලන-තටු ඉරටුකූරා - நீலப் பச்சை மென் செட்டைத் தும்பி)

## 2025 November

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

This unmistakable damselfly is with uniquely coloured hind wings reflecting greens and blues depending on the angle you are observing it. Known from the plains to the mountains, it is one of the most common species along medium sized rivers and streams in the wet and intermediate zones. Males are often observed perched on boulders or vegetation near the streams and engaging in territorial battles with rival males by flying together in a rhythmic pattern, facing each other and reflecting the metallic coloured wings. Females lack metallic wings but are fascinating on their own right by laying eggs while being fully submerged continuously for dozens of minutes. It is the only representative of family Euphaidae in Sri Lanka and one of the most widely recognized endemics.

Artist: Udeshika Priyadarshani

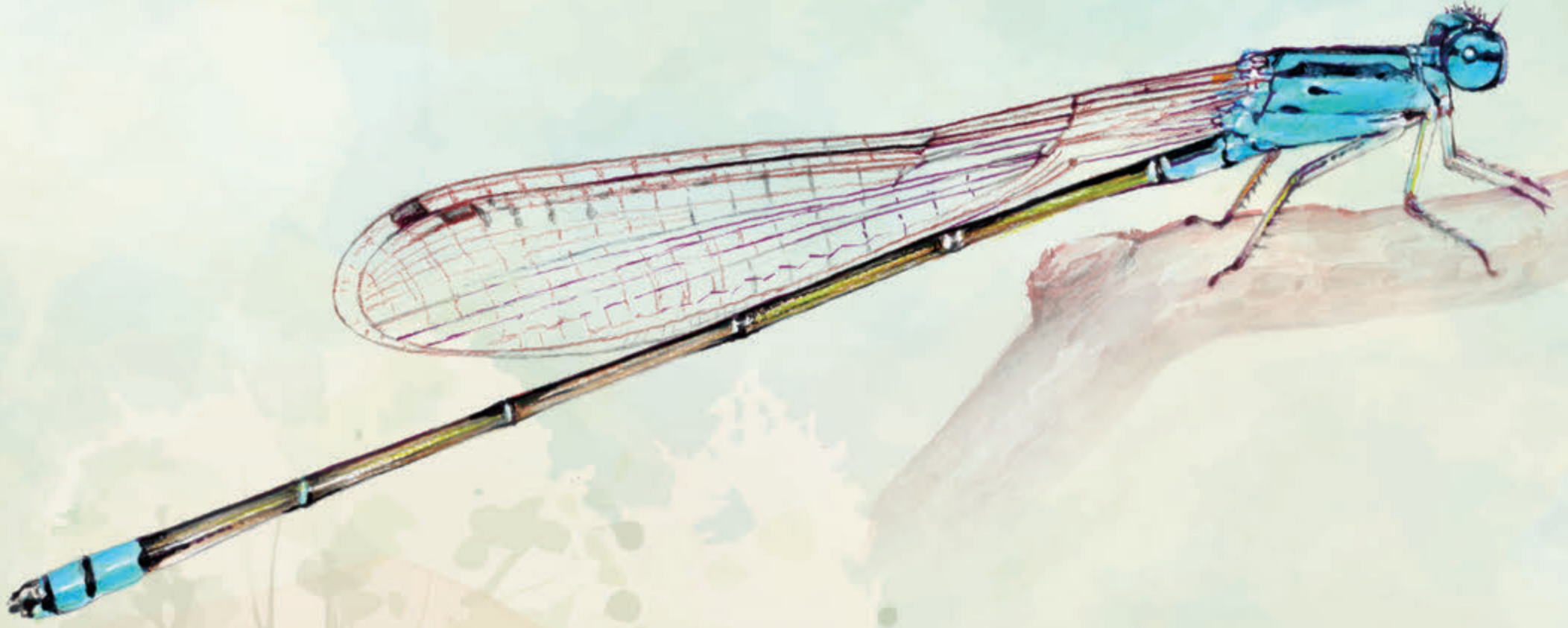


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## Dragonflies of Sri Lanka



### Swamp Sprite

*Archibasis oscillans hanwellanensis*

(චෛසුරු හිලි-ඉරවකුර - சதுப்பு நீல ஊசித்தும்பி)

## 2025 December

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	*25†	26	27	28
29	30	31				

A recently discovered species in Sri Lanka, Swamp Sprite is one of the rarest damselflies in the country. The species can be found in South and Southeast Asia even though the endemic subspecies *hanwellanensis* is confined to the swamp habitats in the wet lowlands of Sri Lanka. Since its discovery from the country over a decade ago, it is yet seen in only a handful of locations. In the swamp habitats, it is usually seen on vegetation under the canopy along very slow flowing streams or stagnated pools. It is likely that the species is rare due to the lack of suitable habitats within its range and thus it is recognized as a species with high conservation priority among Sri Lankan damselflies.

Artist: Pulasthi Ediriweera



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