

ON A COLLECTION OF PAPUAN DRAGONFLIES (*ODONATA*)
MADE BY THE LATE MR. ALLAN R. McCULLOCH IN 1922-3,
WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW SPECIES.

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(Figures 1-6.)

The collection of Dragonflies dealt with in this paper was made by the late Allan R. McCulloch of the Australian Museum, Sydney, during the period from November, 1922, to January, 1923, while exploring unknown regions of the central western part of Papua by boat and aeroplane, in company with Captain Frank Hurley. About one hundred and forty specimens are available for study; these were all originally in paper triangles, but many of the larger species have since been relaxed and set out on pins for the cabinet. An analysis of the Odonata collected shows that three families, eighteen genera and twenty-three species are represented, of which one genus and four species are new to science. Considering the grave difficulties attendant upon collecting in such a dangerous region, the result is a very good one, though it probably represents only a small fraction of the total Odonate fauna of the districts visited.

The specimens were taken in a number of localities, viz., Bramble Cay (Torres Strait), Goaribari Island, various parts of the Fly River, Herbert River, Aramia Lakes, and Lake Murray. Mr. McCulloch very kindly furnished me with some very interesting notes on the collection and the localities visited, from which I give herewith a number of extracts which may help us to visualize the conditions met with.

“ Ordinarily I could speedily have filled my collecting bottles, but was hampered with my rifle, and could not venture far from the other members of the party. One is apt to forget that one's head would be a prized trophy to any of the inhabitants of these parts (Lake Murray) and that even a jaunt in the dinghy is fraught with possible danger to the whole party. Hurley dislikes my venturing within “ arrow-shot ” of the banks, where I am tempted to chase the many and varied dragonflies which flit in such profusion around us.”

The reference here is evidently to *Rhyothemis splendens* Sel., of which several are in the collection before me.

“ Nov. 14th, 1922. Herbert River. Dragonflies with partly iridescent blue-black and partly translucent wings were plentiful in the thick undergrowth of the scrub. They fly with a slow and fluttering flight and are easy to catch, but my net is constantly hooked up in the ever-present thorns of the lawyer vine.”

“ Nov. 29th, 1922. Lake Murray. This lake is a large, swampy area in the centre of western Papua, which doubtless expands or contracts according to the amount of rain. It is drained by the short and winding Herbert River, which is a tributary of the Strickland; this again joins the Fly at Everill Junction. The lake is open but very shallow, being less than a fathom deep at the time of our visit.