

Bugs & All

Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Newsletter of the
Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Observation of Green Marsh Hawk Dragonfly hunt the Common Gull Butterfly



Green Marsh Hawk hunt the Common Gull. © N. Gopinath.

Dragonflies have acute eyesight, agile flight using wings to hunt the prey. They are carnivorous, eat small midges, mosquitoes, butterflies, moths, damselflies, and small dragonflies (www.british-dragonflies.org). Dragonflies are the most efficient hunters, catching up to 95% of the prey they pursue (Combes et al. 2012). According to Powell (1999), a dragonfly may consume as much as a fifth of its body weight in prey per day. The nymphs are voracious predators, eating most living things that are smaller than they are.

During the birding in Kottathur Village, Tiruchirappalli District, I observed a Green Marsh Hawk hunt a butterfly species while in flight. The Green Marsh Hawk dragonfly caught its prey and fed on it within a few minutes while halting on the small dried plant branch. It was the first time that I observed this lively hunt in the environment. Using our field photographs, we identified the species with the help of field guides, Dragonfly (Subramanian et al. 2018), Butterfly (Kehimkar 2016).

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