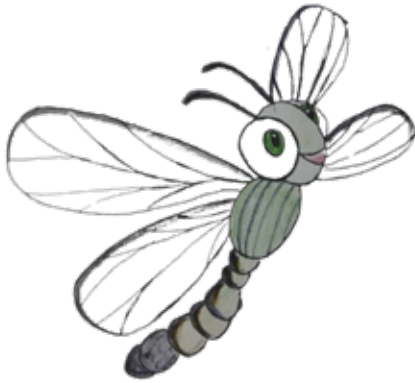


Adding a Dragonfly to my menu



Who am I?

Hey there! I'm *Orthetrum sabina*, but folks call me the Green Marsh Hawk or the Slender Skimmer. I'm a medium-sized dragonfly, and I love to hang around calm water bodies, hunting smaller insects. You can spot me easily with my greenish-yellow body and bold stripes across my thorax. My abdomen has black and reddish-brown spots on my wings that are about 30–36 mm long, just like my body! My eyes are green with black markings, aiding my striking presence.

As for the ladies, they look quite similar to me but with a bit of a twist. Their abdomens are a slightly thicker abdomen, around 32–35 mm long, while their wings are 31–35 mm. But we both share the same eye color and wing spots. Isn't that cool?

Where you can find me?

I'm pretty well-traveled, actually! I am found all over southern and eastern Asia, Australia, Micronesia, and even stretches up to northern Africa.

Do you know my widespread throughout these regions classified me as 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List, which means we're doing okay! You'll find us hanging around various water bodies, like, slow-flowing streams, still ponds, marshes, and even paddy fields. We can also be spotted from sea level all the way up to 2,300 m elevation. But we're not just water lovers—we can often be seen perching away from the water, on garden plants, branches, twigs, rocks, and even the ground. We're pretty adaptable too, thriving in different climates and elevations. Plus, we can tolerate high salt levels and even habitat changes or disturbances. Not bad for a dragonfly, right?



Curious About My Hunting Style?

Getting inspired from Edward Osborne Wilson said, “The more we learn about the intricate details of natural ecosystems, the more we can appreciate the interdependence of species.” several researchers have taken an interest in studying my feeding behavior. Now, let’s talk about it. I am quite the hungry dragonfly and I eat a wide variety of insects, sometimes smaller damselflies, although they’re not my first choice because they don’t offer much food. Studies have shown me preying on butterflies.

Let’s track my diet from Sri Lanka to Nepal

I’m known to be quite the predator and yes, even from my own family Libellulidae like *Neurothemis tullia* also known as Pied Paddy Skimmer! Recently, Gamage in 2023 reported spotting me feeding on paddy skimmer in Sri Lanka. A few years earlier, Sharma & Oli in 2020 mentioned seeing me do the same in the Palpa District of Nepal, but they didn’t go into much detail. That’s where Mahamad Sayab Miya & Apeksha Chhetri came in – they made a dedicated effort to study my feeding behavior, and guess what? They finally spotted me hunting *N. tullia* in Nepal as well in 2024! What’s interesting is that these two areas are quite far apart.



Do you want to know how they studied this?

The observation took place during a survey at Maldi Lake in Pokhara Valley, on 30 July 2022. Researchers laid three 200-m long straight line to collect data once a month from July to December 2022 between 10:00 h and 15:00 h on sunny days. During the survey, they photographed my chomping on *Neurothemis tullia*, using a smartphone and identified later with field guides.

Want to know how I chomp on my meal?

I start by chewing the head and then move down through the body parts. I hold my prey with my forelegs while perched on an herbaceous plant. Surprisingly, I didn't fly away even when the researchers approached to take a photograph. The entire feeding process lasted over 15 minutes and took place about 3 meters away from the water body. Cool right?

Want to know what is special about this study?

But what makes my story even more interesting is how my feeding behaviour has been observed in two places that are miles apart – Sri Lanka and Nepal. Not only far from each other but also have distinct biogeography. Sri Lanka, with its tropical climate and Nepal from the lowlands to the high mountains, couldn't be more different. Yet, in both places, I was spotted feeding on *N. tullia*, a behaviour that piqued the interest of researchers around the world. There's clearly a pattern, suggesting that more studies are needed to fully understand my feeding behaviour.

Hold on tight, folks-there's more to my feeding story waiting to unfold!

JoTT article summarized:

Miya, M.S. & Chhetri, A. (2024). Additional documentation of the Slender Skimmer *Orthetrum sabina* (Drury, 1770) preying on the Pied Paddy Skimmer *Neurothemis tullia* (Drury, 1773) in Nepal. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 16(9): 25935–25938. <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.9260.16.9.25935-25938>

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