

Three New Dragonfly Species Discovered in Central China

Scientists from the Institute of Hydrobiology (IHB), Chinese Academy of Sciences recently reported three new species of dragonfly which they had discovered in a field investigation in Shennongjia, a forest district in central China's Hubei Province. The new species, namely *C. discolor*, *C. mattii* and *C. solitaria*, are endemic and found nowhere else in the world but in Central China.

The genus *Cephalaeschna* is among the most ancient dragonfly groups which are only distributed in Asia. All *Cephalaeschna* species are confined to running water habitats located in mountain ranges with dense forests.

Some can live in extremely high mountains. Most of them are on the wing late in the season. At present, about 20 *Cephalaeschna* species are known to the world. After the survey in Shennongjia, the number of *Cephalaeschna* species indigenous to China increased from eight to 11.

The discovery showed that the biodiversity of dragonfly may be high in Central China. The new species are endemic to the region so they are of high scientific value for fauna and environmental studies. For instance, as *Cephalaeschna* larvae can only be bred in very clean montane streams, they can be used as an important indicator of water quality.



1. A female *Cephalaeschna discolor*.

2. A male *Cephalaeschna discolor*.

3. A male *Cephalaeschna mattii*.

4. A male *Cephalaeschna solitaria*. (Photos by Dr. ZHANG Haomiao)