Confirmation of Cordulephya montana (Mountain Shutwing dragonfly) in Victoria

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Introduction

This article contains information about recent sightings of Cordulephya montana (Tillyard, 1911) in eastern Victoria.

The species has long been known to inhabit the east coast of New South Wales. Len Mueller and Günther Theischinger have collected the species near Eden and “Nadgee area” (personal correspondence) in south-eastern New South Wales. From such findings it was suggested the species would be present in Victoria – possibly mentioned in Dragonflies of Victoria (Theischinger & Hawking, 2003).

*Cordulephya montana* is however quite similar to a more common species: *Cordulephya pygmaea* (Common Shutwing). The size and shape of the paler metepimeral patch (rear underside of thorax) is diagnostic (it is significantly pale in *C. pygmaea* but almost absent in *C. montana*) but the pale markings on top of the abdomen also seem to be distinctive.

Flight times of adults are also indicative. *Cordulephya pygmaea* is considered a late-season species, mainly seen in flight March–May, whilst *C. montana* is likely to be observed earlier (December–March). There is a significant crossover period but early sightings are less likely to be *C. pygmaea*.

Victorian Sightings

My personal records are made from photographs in situ – I (try to) take a photo of every species I encounter on a trip. In this case I thought I had observed *C. pygmaea* at the time and did not concern myself about getting detailed photographs of particularly diagnostic features. Subsequently, after publishing photos on my web site ([http://photos.rnr.id.au/2011/12/24/](http://photos.rnr.id.au/2011/12/24/)) I was alerted to my misidentification by Len Mueller. Subsequent reviews of my photos revealed that I had also seen and photographed *C. montana* three years earlier.
Another Possible Location

Whilst going through my records of *Cordulephya pygmaea* I also noticed one where the abdominal markings match that of *C. montana*. Unfortunately I did not consider nor attempt to get a lower view of the abdomen for the diagnostic patch.

![Cordulephya sp.](image1) 10 February 2010, Thomson River at Saddle Track, Baw Baw National Park: 37.8673°S 146.4072°E

![Cordulephya pygmaea](image2), Westerfolds Park, Templestowe: 37.7514°S 145.1205°E

Previous Records

The following distribution maps were obtained from the online Atlas of Living Australia (ALA), which contains 24 public records for *C. montana* (does not include the ones mentioned previously) and 66 for *C. pygmaea* (retrieved 30 September 2012).

![Distribution Map 1](image3)  
![Distribution Map 2](image4)

http://bie.ala.org.au/species/Cordulephya+montana  
http://bie.ala.org.au/species/Cordulephya+pygmaea