

Discovery of Pseudagrion microcephalum (Blue Riverdamselfly) in Victoria

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Introduction

This article contains information about discovering a colony of *Pseudagrion microcephalum* (Rambur, 1842 Odonata: Coenagrionidae) in east Gippsland, Victoria. Although first positively identified from photographs taken in January 2009, searching through archived photos it was also sighted there three years earlier.



Male *Pseudagrion microcephalum*, Elusive Lake April 2010

Initial Discovery

During a visit to Croajingolong National Park in far east Victoria, several species of blue damselflies were observed around the sandy shores of the freshwater Elusive Lake. At the time numerous digital photographs were taken and at the time they were all assumed to be either *Austroagrion watsoni* (Eastern Billabongfly) or *Ischnura heterosticta* (Common Bluetail), both very common and widespread in Victoria.

After returning home and categorizing the photos it became apparent that there were differences in the markings of some of the damselflies photographed and they could not be placed within the known list of species for Victoria.

They were tentatively identified as *Pseudagrion microcephalum* though uncertainty remained amongst fellow odonata enthusiasts so the site was revisited a few weeks later to obtain better photographs.

Identification

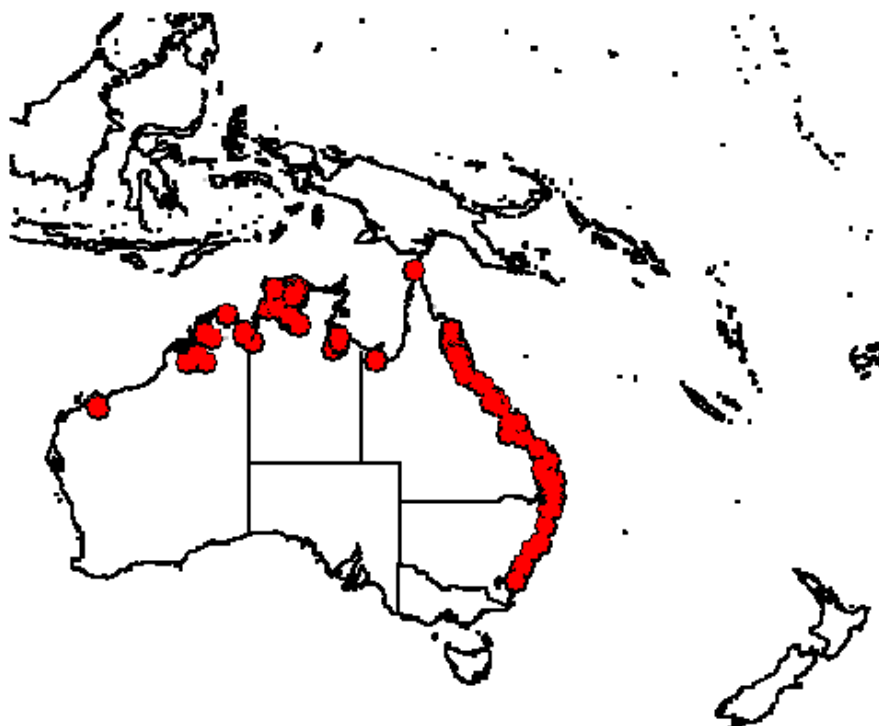
Pseudagrion microcephalum is similar in size to *Ischnura heterosticta* and the blue-and-black patterns of the males are similar to *Austroagrion watsoni*. Seeing them together in the wild they can readily be separated but initial identification from photos was made difficult because size could not longer be determined.

One feature of *I. heterosticta* is the post-ocular blue stripe while *I. heterosticta* has blue dots. By comparison *P. microcephalum* usually has blue triangular shapes joined by a line. This convergence made initial separation of the species more difficult.

Previous Records

The following map was obtained from the CSIRO Australian National Insect Collection Database and shows previously known locations.

http://anic.ento.csiro.au/database/biota_details.aspx?BiotaID=24147



As can be seen, it is common along the east coast of Australia northwards from Wollongong. It is not greatly out of its range in far eastern Victoria considering that it is otherwise quite widespread.

http://photos.rnr.id.au/reports/Pseudagrion_microcephalum_2010.pdf