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Dragon flies feed on termites

Dean A. Anderson
Brigham Young University

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GENERAL NOTES

Dragon Flies Feed on Termites

Dr. Tanner, sometime ago I mentioned an interesting phenomenon which I observed during the summer months, and I wish herewith to give you a written statement of that observation.

About the middle of August, 1941, while walking along the path immediately east of the President's home, I noted a large swarm of dragon flies. They kept darting downward, fluttering for a moment or two above the ground, and then sailing off. The swarm was very large, probably several hundred dragon flies, and they seemed to be concentrating in a relatively small area.

I walked into the center of the swarm and sat down to observe what was going on. I found that they were hovering immediately above a bed of what were probably termites. Many of these forms were in the flying stage, and as they began to fly upward the dragon fly would dart down, intercept them, and after a few deft twists and turns would nip off the abdomen. The head, thorax, and wings would then flutter to the ground. The ground was littered with dozens of these dismembered insects. I picked up several, thrust them in the air, and found that they had hardly begun to fly until the dragon flies were on them. The numbers of flying forms must have been large, but I should judge that a great proportion of them had been dismembered by the dragon flies.

The following morning I again observed the swarming area, and although all living forms had disappeared, the ground still showed many of these dead half-bodies. The dragon flies apparently must have eaten the abdomen completely, since I saw no evidence of the outer abdominal cases.—Dean A. Anderson, B. Y. U.

Ranatra Quadridentata Stal (Nepidae) Found in Utah

While studying the aquatic life of Salem Pond in April, 1940, two specimens of water scorpion, *Ranatra quadridentata* Stal., were collected. This is a new record for the State of Utah. According to Dr. Hungerford this species is distinctive and should not be considered as a synonym of *A. americana* Montandon.

Two other species of this family have recently been added to the Brigham Young University entomological collection. They are *Ranata nigra* Herrich-Schaffer, collected at Urbana, Illinois, September, 1939, and *R. burnsi* Hungerford collected at Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee by Prof. C. Lynn Hayward.—Vasco M. Tanner.