

A NOTE ON *NEODARTUS ACOCEPHALOIDES* MELICHAR
(HOMOPTERA : CICADELLIDAE) FROM TAMILNADU

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INTRODUCTION

While working on leafhoppers of Tamil Nadu, the author came across *Neodartus acocephaloides* Melichar showing different colour patterns and the same is recorded. Three species of the genus *Neodartus* are known from the Indian subcontinent as reported by Distant (1908-1918). Metcalf (1962) catalogued other species of the World. *Neodartus acocephaloides* is economically important as it affects many plants. Variations in the colour pattern of the species is discussed here and a key to the hitherto known species of the genus from India is also given.

Key to the Indian species of Neodartus Melichar

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|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Scutellum pale with four basal and two central black spots. ... | <i>N. scutellatus</i> Dist. |
| — Scutellum black with three pale spots, one on each side, and the other at apex ... | 2 |
| 2. Tegmina black with rufous spots ... | <i>N. rufopunctatus</i> |
| | de/Motsch. |
| — Tegmina black or brown and at middle with a wavy transverse series of five pale spots ... | <i>N. acocephaloides</i> Melich. |

***Neodartus acocephaloides* Melichar**

1903. *Neodartus acocephaloides* Melichar, *Hom. Fauna Ceylon*, 163.
1908. *Neodartus acocephaloides* ; Distant, *Fauna Brit. India, Rhynchota*, 4 : 246 ; Distant, 1918, *Ibid.* 7 : 25.
1934. *Neodartus acocephaloides* : Sing-Pruthi, *Indian Forest Rec. Ent. Ser.* 19 (4) : 30.
1962. *Neodartus acocephaloides* : Metcalf, *General catalogue of the Homoptera, Cicadellidae*, vi (3) : 205-210.

Vertex, pronotum and Scutellum black, with greyish pubescens. Scutellum black with three ochraceous spots, one on each side and the other at apex. Tegmen black or ochraceous with four pale greyish spots at apex and a wavy transverse series of five greyish spots at the middle of tegmen ; sometimes with four spots only, spots either oval, elliptical, or circular. Body beneath black or ochraceous. Legs long spinulose ; pygofers long convex ; ovipositor long extending beyond the tip of abdomen.

Measurements : Males 3.60 to 3.88 mm long and 1.60 to 1.64 mm wide. Females 3.84 to 4.20 mm long and 1.64 to 1.84 mm wide.

Material examined : 1 ♀, Pudupettu, Javadhi hills, 28-4-1984, N. A. Dist. Coll. K. R. Rao ; 1 ♀, Yalugam, 10-3-1986, 1 ♀, Adamkottai, 11-5-1986, Pudukkottai dist. Coll. G. Thirumalai ; 1 ♀, Talikkampalli, 1-8-1988, Kamaraj Dist. Coll. G. Thirumalai ; 1 ♂, 1 ♀, Poonamanai, Kulasekaram Rd. 26-3-1989, 1 ♂, Lower Kodayar, 31-3-1989, Kanyakumari dist. Coll. K. Mathew ; 1 ♀, Mettupalayam, 27-4-1989, 1 ♀, Thanikattigam, 28-4-1989, Thanjavur dist. Coll. K. R. Rao : 1 ♀, Kondanur, Nilgiri Biosphere, 21-11-1989, Coll. G. Thirumalai.

Distribution : It is so far reported from Sri Lanka and Philippines and from India it is known from Madras, Coorg, Bengal and Punjab. Now it is being reported from various districts of Tamil Nadu.

Remarks : This species is found to vary in colouration of body and tegmen. Vertex, pronotum and scutellum are usually black otherwise fuscous. Tegmen usually with five spots as a transverse series at the middle, but sometimes only four are seen. The spots may be either oval, elliptical or circular. The males exhibit very small spots as a transverse series at the middle of tegmen.

ABSTRACT

Variations of colour pattern as seen in *Neodartus acocephaloides* Melichar are studied and a key to the Indian species of *Neodartus* Melichar is given.

SUMMARY

Colour variations in *Neodartus acocephaloides* Melichar are noted and distributional records of the species from Tamil Nadu are reported for the first time. A key to the Indian species of *Neodartus* Melichar is also given.

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- Metcalf, Z. P. 1962. *General catalogue of the Homoptera, Cicadellidae, Fasc. vl. (3), Gyponidae* : 205-210.