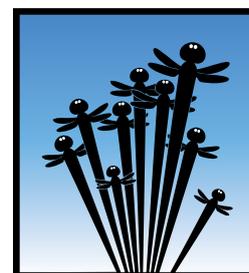


7th Balkan Odonatological Meeting (BOOM) - 2017 Slovenia

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The idea of a Balkan odonatological camp started at the First European Congress of Odonatology in 2010 in Porto, Portugal. It happened while eating burgers at a small fast food restaurant one day. Those present were mostly, but not exclusively, odonatologists from the countries of the West Balkan Peninsula. Behind the idea was the fact that the Balkans are one of the least researched areas in Europe, which is partly due to a small number of people working on dragonflies in the region. And so, among others the decision to start a summer research and educational camp to unite Balkan odonatologists and create a place to teach young odonatologists and other nature observers and promote odonatology in the region was made (Jovič 2011). It was to be hosted by a different Balkan country each year. This is how the Balkan Odonatological Meeting (or BOOM) was born, with the main goal of further development of odonatology in the Balkans. With its focus on fieldwork, BOOM gives the opportunity of gaining experience in dragonfly identification and to gather new data on dragonfly distribution in selected areas (Vinko 2011a).



The first BOOM was supposed to be held in Macedonia in 2011, but due to various reasons the Slovene Dragonfly Society was the one that bravely took on the burden of being the first organizer. Since then, BOOM has been held in Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, R. Macedonia and twice in Serbia. New regional cooperation and joint research resulted in several papers on dragonfly fauna of the region (Šácha & Bedjanič 2011; Vinko 2011b; Vinko & Vilenica 2013; Rajkov et al. 2015; Kulijer et al. 2016; Vinko et al. 2016, 2017a, 2017b). After six years BOOM returned to Slovenia in 2017.

The 7th Balkan Odonatological Meeting was organized by the Slovene Dragonfly Society from 4th to 11th August 2017, mainly in two regions of Slovenia. A total of 32 participants (making it the largest Meeting so far) from Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, R. Macedonia, Croatia, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden took part in the Meeting (Vinko 2017). Among them, were two participants who have attended all the previous Meetings. The camp was possible thanks to support from the Worldwide Dragonfly Association, Student Organization of University of Ljubljana and Biotechnical faculty, Gesellschaft deutschsprachiger Odonatologen, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Vopex d.o.o., ŠOLT, Študentski kampus, Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana and the Centre for Cartography of Fauna and Flora.

It is traditional and also practical for thoroughly surveying as large an area as possible to station the Meeting in different parts of the country or in some cases the region (depending on the size of the country). This year we started BOOM at Gorenjska region in the mountains of Pokljuka (north-west Slovenia) where larger peat bogs are found, one of the rarest habitats in the country. During the two days we stayed there we surveyed the nearby



Figure 1. Group photo, 7th Balkan Odonatological Meeting (BOOM), 10 August 2017, Slovenia. Photo credit: Rudi Krashevec.

and distant surroundings of our camp, which was a scouts' cottage in Zgornje Gorje. We divided into five groups to research Pokljuka Plateau and also drove as far as Radovljica, Kranjska Gora and even to Tarvisio (north-east Italy). On the third day we moved to another scouts' cottage at Bohinj lake (north-west Slovenia), one of the most beautiful lakes in Slovenia and the largest. We shared our accommodation with some young scouts, but on the plus side, for the two days we stayed there, we were served some hot delicious meals (elsewhere we had to cook for ourselves). They also lent us canoes for us to take a look at dragonflies on the lake. Two groups even hiked to survey odonates in the nearby mountains. The last area we chose to stay at was a cultural and youth home in Zapotok pri Igu pri Ljubljani (central Slovenia). And so, the fifth day was dedicated to researching the areas between Bohinj and Ljubljana. We stayed for three days at our final destination and in that time covered the areas between Logatec, Cerknica, Turjak, Grosuplje and Ljubljana. In a week we visited peat bogs, fish ponds, marshes, rivers, gravel pits, streams, lakes, ponds, reeds, clay pits, mountain pools and many more.

During the Meeting it is traditional that some lectures are also organized. This year Damjan Vinko from Slovenia presented dragonfly fauna of the region and the past results of the BOOMs, Robin Pranter from Sweden walked us through his diploma thesis *Intra- and interspecific variation and sexual dimorphism in colour, size, maturation time, phenology and survival of odonates* and Dolf Ramaker from the Netherlands took us on a journey of dragonflies of Ghana, Africa.

During this survey, the number of observed species comprised two thirds of all known dragonfly species in the country. Altogether 780 records for 48 species were collected at 183 investigated sites (Vinko 2017). Larvae of nine species, exuviae of 17 and imagines of 48 species were identified.

The noteworthy results are new records of several nationally rare species - e.g., *Lestes virens vestalis*, *Sympetrum pedemontanum*, *S. meridionale* - as well as new populations of *Cordulegaster heros* and *Ophiogomphus cecilia*, species from the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). Numerous new records of more common species were also collected. For several species with a relatively low number of previously published records for Slovenia (i.e. *Chalcolestes viridis*, *Erythromma najas*, *E. lindenbergii*, *Aeshna affinis*, *Somatochlora flavomaculata*, *Sympetrum vulgatum*), our survey adds new localities and extends their known range in the country (Kotarac 1997; BIOPORTAL.SI 2017). Participants from the southern countries also had a nice opportunity to investigate species rare or absent in their



Figure 2-4. (2) Gorenjska region in the mountains of Pokljuka (north-west Slovenia) where large peat bogs are found. Credit: Ana Tratnik. (3) Bohinj lake (north-west Slovenia). Credit: Klemen Kisovec. (4) Weed choked ditch. Photo credit: Nina Erbida.



Figure 5. Field trip group photo. Photo credit: Damjan Vinko.

countries; for example *Aeshna subarctica*, *A. juncea*, *A. grandis*, *Somatochlora metallica*, *S. arctica*, *S. meridionalis* and *Leucorrhinia dubia*.

The planning for the next year's Meeting has already started, yet for the first time we don't have a definite destination. At the meeting it was decided that the next BOOM will be held in a Balkan country that starts with the letter "B" (Bulgaria or Bosnia and Herzegovina), but an alternative was offered soon after the Meeting - one of the least researched countries of the Balkans, Kosovo. All we know for sure is that the field work will be interesting either way and the company good.

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