Yellow-tailed Ashy Skimmer

Prelims: *Current events of national and international events | Conservation*

Why in news?

At the Yamuna Biodiversity Park, Yellow-tailed Ashy Skimmer has been recorded during a recent dragonfly survey in Delhi.

- It is a ***medium-sized dragonfly,*** commonly known as Blue Percher, Yellow-tailed Ashy Skimmer, Blue Pursuer and Blue Chaser.
- **Scientific Name -** Potamarcha congener.
- **Appearance -** The 'yellow tail' refers to the predominantly yellow abdomen, which bears black markings.
- The 'ashy' refers to the thorax, which appears to be invariably pruinosed (frosted in appearance).



- **Characteristics**
- There is a distinct difference in the appearance of males and females, particularly as they mature.
  - **Male -** Adult males have a bluish, powder-like coating (pruinescence) on their thorax and the first half of their abdomen.
  - The face is typically olivaceous yellow, and the eyes are reddish-

brown on top and bluish-gray below.
    - **Female -** The female's thorax has yellow and black stripes on the sides, and the abdomen is black with dull orange markings.
    - They also have prominent flaps on the sides of the eighth abdominal segment, which are used during egg-laying.
- **Habitat -** It is commonly found near bodies of **standing water**, such as small ponds, marshes, and rice fields.
- **Distribution -** Its distribution includes a wide range of countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, including India, China, Australia, and Indonesia.
    - **In India** - It is found across the northern and northwestern plains.
- **Behavior and diet**
    - **Predatory lifestyle** - As a top predator of smaller insects, it is an expert hunter, with acute vision to detect prey up to 15 meters away.
    - **Prey -** The naiads, or immature dragonflies, hunt small aquatic organisms underwater, while adults hunt small flying insects in the air.
- **Conservation status – IUCN -** Least Concern.
- **Significance -** Dragonflies and damselflies are bioindicators or species whose presence tracks wetland health.
- Their larval stages require clean, well-oxygenated water, and both larvae and adults are voracious mosquito predators.

Quick Facts

• **Kalindi and Kamla Nehru Ridge** together accounted for more than half the dragonfly species count in Delhi.
• Delhi is known to host about **51 species of odonates** (dragonflies and damselflies).

Reference

[The Indian Express | Yellow-tailed Ashy Skimmer]

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