

shape of female epigyne and male palp. These are very small spiders living on the ground among debris. The movement of these spiders is very peculiar in that while walking, they always keep the first pair of legs turned up for purposes of defence.

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,  
WESTERN REGIONAL STATION,  
POONA - 5,  
October 23, 1975.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to Dr. S. Khera, Deputy Director-in-Charge, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta for providing some rare literature on jumping spiders and to Dr. P. Merrett for going through the manuscript and for suggestions.

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## 21. BEHAVIOUR OF DRAGONFLIES

About 14.00 hrs on 24 August, on the top of Kanheri hill near Bombay (c. 500 m), a dragon-fly, disturbed by my approach, flew from one strobilanthus leaf to another a few yards ahead, and then to another. I had stopped to watch it when a second dragon-fly, with a white dot at the end of its tail, landed on the same leaf, behind the first one but facing in the other direction, and immediately the two insects coupled. Probably there had been some aerial pursuit which I did not see, but on the leaf there were no preliminaries. I watched for five minutes, during which time the only movement was that the second insect slewed around so that instead of being in a straight line the

coupled bodies formed a widely-opened U. Then I moved off, and five minutes later the insects had disappeared.

It was a cloudy, windy day but no rain had fallen for some hours, and the nearest standing water was about a kilometre away. As only the tips of the tails were in contact the behaviour would not seem sexual in character. In DRAGONFLIES, Philip S. Corbet says 'most dragonflies spend the first two weeks of life away from water attaining sexual maturity' (p. 105) but I cannot see any reference to contact between dragonflies on the ground and wonder if such behaviour is typical and often seen.

56 VALENTINA,  
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Hawkins, R E. 1976. "Behaviour of Dragonflies." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 73, 411–411.

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