

Two new records of the common hawker *Aeshna juncea* (LINNAEUS, 1758) in the Austrian Alps

Dwa nowe stanowiska żagnicy torfowej *Aeshna juncea* (LINNAEUS, 1758)
w austriackich Alpach

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Abstract: The common hawker (*Aeshna juncea*) is widespread in Europe, preferring acidic peat bogs and small dystrophic water bodies, particularly those with sedge-covered banks. The species is classified as Endangered (EN) on the latest European Red List of Odonata due to a strong decline in populations over the past decade, primarily driven by habitat loss and hydrological changes. In Austria, *A. juncea* is common and classified as Least Concern (LC) on the Austrian Red List. This study documents two previously unrecorded sites of *A. juncea* in the Austrian Alps, highlighting its presence in mountain habitats. These records might be important for monitoring environmental changes in alpine regions.

Abstrakt: Żagnica torfowa (*Aeshna juncea*) jest szeroko rozpowszechniona w Europie. Preferuje kwaśne wody torfowiskowe i małe dystroficzne zbiorniki wodne, szczególnie te z brzegami porośniętymi turzycami. Gatunek ten został sklasyfikowany jako zagrożony (EN) na najnowszej Europejskiej Czerwonej Liście Ważek z powodu znacznego spadku liczebności populacji w ciągu ostatniej dekady, głównie na skutek utraty siedlisk i zmian hydrologicznych. W Austrii *A. juncea* jest gatunkiem pospolitym i sklasyfikowanym jako najmniejszej troski (LC) na Austriackiej Czerwonej Liście. W niniejszym badaniu udokumentowano dwa wcześniej nieodnotowane stanowiska *A. juncea* w austriackich Alpach, podkreślając jego obecność w siedliskach górskich. Dane mogą być istotne w kontekście monitorowania zmian środowiskowych w obszarach alpejskich

Keywords: Austrian Alps, conservation, European Red List of Odonata, faunistics, habitat, threats.

The common hawker *Aeshna juncea* (LINNAEUS, 1758) is widespread throughout Europe, preferring acidic peat bog waters and small dystrophic water bodies, particularly those with sedge-covered banks (BILLQVIST et al. 2019; DIJKSTRA and SCHRÖTER 2020; FLENKER 2011; MICEVSKI et al. 2008; ŚNIEGULA 2006; ŚNIEGULA and GOŁĄB 2009; ŚNIEGULA and JOHANSSON 2006). According to the latest European Red List of Odonata published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *A. juncea* is classified as Endangered (EN). During the past decade, population declines exceeding 50% have been recorded across Europe, primarily due to habitat loss and hydrological changes (KNIJF et al. 2024). As reported in the latest Europe assessment, the species is extinct in Luxemburg and probably extinct in Hungary (BILLQVIST et al. 2024). The IUCN report predicts a continued contraction of this species in Europe. Mountain opulations, which inhabit acidic water bodies, are particularly vulnerable (KNIJF et al. 2024).

In Austria, *A. juncea* is a common species. Since 2006, it has been listed as Least Concern (LC) on the Austrian Red List of Dragonflies (RAAB 2006). The species inhabits peatland water bodies and alpine mountain lakes. In mountainous areas, it is observed to breed at altitudes above 2000 m altitude. (LÖSCH et al. 2018). Its presence in these habitats makes it an important species for monitoring environmental changes in alpine regions (OERTLI et al. 2014). Below, two previously unrecorded sites of the common hawker in the Austrian Alps are described

First site: On 5 July 2024, an emerging female *A. juncea* was observed in the city of Gröbming (47°27'02.7"N, 13°54'13.3"E, 780 m above sea level). The *exuviae* was collected and preserved. The site is a garden pond with an area of approximately 25 m² and moderately clear water (Fig. 1). The vegetation includes aquatic and marsh plants characteristic of oligotrophic and slightly eutrophic habitats, such as *Eriophorum latifolium* HOPPE and *Phragmites australis* (CAV.) TRIN. EX STEUD.



Fig.1. Emergence of a female *Aeshna juncea* in a rainwater-fed garden pond (first site).

Photo by Szymon Śniegula.

Fig.1. Przeobrażenie samicy *Aeshna juncea* w stawie ogrodowym zasilanym wodą deszczową (stanowisko 1).

Fot. Szymon Śniegula.



Fig. 2. Mountain pond fed by spring and rainwater as habitat for *Aeshna juncea* (second site).

Photo by Szymon Śniegula.

Fig.1. Górski staw zasilany wodą źródłaną i deszczową jako siedlisko *Aeshna juncea* (stanowisko 2).

Fot. Szymon Śniegula.

Second site: On 5 July 2024, on the eastern slope of Hohe Sieg mountain (1151 m above sea level), at an altitude of 840 m above sea level and approximately 350 m above Lake Hallstätter, two exuviae (one male and one female) of *A. juncea* were collected and preserved (47°33'39.5"N, 13°38'32.3"E). The site is a small water body with an area of approximately 25 m², characterised by clear spring- and rain fed water (Fig. 2). Typical aquatic and marsh vegetation was absent at this site.

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