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## Biology, feeding potential and functional response of *Chrysoperla zastrowisillemi* to cotton aphid, *Aphis gossypii* glover

**Diksha Kumari, SC Verma, PL Sharma and Sarswati Negi**

### Abstract

Biology, feeding potential and functional response of *Chrysoperla zastrowisillemi* to cotton aphid, *Aphis gossypii* Glover was studied in the laboratory at  $25 \pm 0.5$  °C, 70 ± 5% RH and 12L:12D photoperiod. The study reveal that the incubation, total larval, pre pupal and pupal period of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 2.60, 11.62, 1.10 and 8.30 days, respectively. Pre oviposition, oviposition and post oviposition period of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 3.60, 24.70 and 7.80 days, respectively and each female laid an average of 398.9 eggs. On an average 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars of *C. zastrowisillemi* consumed 30.46, 98.7 and 301.7 aphids and total consumption during life cycle was 431.06 aphids/ predator. All the three larval stages of the predator exhibited Type II functional response to the aphid. Based on Rogers's random predator equation the predator's attack rate was lowest (0.089) in the first instar and highest (0.140) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> instar. Handling times of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instar was 1.767, 0.367 and 0.269h, respectively. Functional response parameters indicate that attack rate increased and handling time decreased with the advancement of the predator stage. Third instar larvae were the most voracious feeders and could be crucial for the biological control of the cotton aphid.

**Keywords:** Biology, feeding potential, attack rate, *Chrysoperla zastrowisillemi*, handling time, predator, functional response

### Introduction

Cucumber, *Cucumis sativus* L. is one of the most important commercial vegetables grown throughout the world [1]. It is a warm season crop mainly grown in tropical and subtropical areas in open fields, whereas, in temperate countries it is grown under glasshouses. Among different insect-pests attacking cucumber, cotton aphid, *Aphis gossypii* Glover (Homoptera: Aphididae) is the important one causing severe damage to the cucumber crop. The cotton aphid, *A. gossypii* is a cosmopolitan, polyphagous species infesting 569 host plants belonging to 80 families [2, 3]. Both nymphs and adults damage the crop by sucking the cell sap, resulting in curling of leaves or appearance of discoloured spots on the foliage. As the aphid become more abundant in juvenile stage, the plants gradually wilt, become yellowish to brownish and ultimately die. Heavy infestation of the aphid, results in reduction of the yield and quality of fruit by contaminating with honeydew which encourages sooty mould that disturbs the normal physiology of the leaves and also act as vector of 76 plant viruses [4-6]. The indiscriminate use of synthetic pesticides for the control of this pest leads to the development of insecticide resistance [7-12], pest resurgence, insecticide residue, environment pollution besides and killing of natural enemies. Insecticide resistance forces the farmers to increase the dose and/or frequency of pesticide application which further aggravates the problem [9]. Therefore, there is a need to find out some alternatives of chemical pesticides to protect cucumber against cotton aphid. Under such circumstances, biological control can be a viable, ecofriendly and sustainable option to control this pest [13]. Green lace wing, *C. zastrowisillemi* (Chrysopidae: Neuroptera) has been reported to naturally suppress the aphid populations in different cropping systems [14, 15]. Before using *C. zastrowisillemi* in a biological control programme, it is essential to evaluate its predatory efficiency against the target species. Thus, it is necessary to know the biology, feeding potential and functional response of *C. zastrowisillemi* on *A. gossypii* on cucumber for its possible utilization in biological control of the pest. The literature on biology and predatory potential of *C. zastrowisillemi* against *A. gossypii* on different in India is scanty [16-18]. However, the information on the biology and feeding potential of *C. zastrowisillemi* of *A. gossypii* on cucumber is lacking. Information on these variables could

lead to the development of a better strategy for the biological control of *A. gossypii* using the predator.

## Materials and Methods

### Rearing of cotton aphid, *A. gossypii*

The cotton aphid, *A. gossypii* was collected from cucumber field and was maintained in the polyhouse throughout the year on cucumber plants in the Department of Entomology, Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan Himachal Pradesh, India. Cucumber leaves having nymphs were brought to laboratory for the further experiments. Before maturity of the old plants new plants were planted to maintain the culture of cotton aphid throughout the year.

### Developmental biology of *C. z. sillemi*

Developmental biology of the chrysopid was studied on *A. gossypii* at 25± 1°C, and 70± 5 per cent RH and 12:12 h photoperiod. One pair of newly emerged adults of *Chrysoperla zastrowisillemi* was released in the chrysoperla rearing cage covered with the piece of black cloth. Five per cent mixture of honey, protein X and yeast in a cotton ball was provided as food to the adults. The food was changed twice a day. The data on pre-oviposition period, oviposition period, post-oviposition and fecundity, were recorded. The freshly emerged larvae were taken out from cage and released individually in the Petri plates containing moist blotting paper and cucumber leaves (6×6 cm) infested with mixed population of second and third instar of *A. gossypii*. The incubation period, duration of each larval instar, total larval duration, pre pupal, pupal and total duration from egg to adult emergence was recorded.

### Feeding Potential

Feeding potential of different developmental stages of *C. zastrowisillemi* was studied against *A. gossypii*. Newly hatched larvae of the same stage were confined individually to a single Petri plate having counted number of cotton aphids of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> instar nymphs. The cotton aphids of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> stage were selected by careful examination of the cucumber leaves under the stereo zoom binocular microscope. The unwanted stages of cotton aphids were removed with the help of camel hair brush. The base of the Petri plate was covered with the wet blotting paper. The experiment was carried out at the same environmental conditions mentioned above. The data on aphid consumption by the chrysopid was recorded after every 24 h till they enter the next stage and the food was changed daily. The experiment was replicated ten times. The number of aphids consumed per day by each larval instar of the chrysopid was also calculated.

Data analysis: The data obtained were subjected to one way analysis of variance through online statistical software OPSTAT<sup>[19]</sup>.

### Functional response of Chrysopids

Functional responses of each larval stage of *C. zastrowisillemi* were studied to the second or third nymphal stage of cotton aphid in a Petri plate on 6 cm cucumber leaf disk at the same environmental conditions mentioned above. Seven prey densities (each replicated 10 times) were provided to the individuals of different stages of predators on cucumber leaves in petri plates separately. Prey densities used in the study were 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 for first larval instar; 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and 70 for second instar and 20, 40, 60, 80, 100 and 120 for third instar of the chrysopid. After 24 h,

the number of aphids consumed by the larva was recorded by counting the aphids remaining on the petri-plate.

### Data analysis of functional response

A logistic regression between proportion of prey consumed and prey density offered were fitted to determine the shape (type II or type III) of functional response:

$$N_e/N_0 = \frac{\exp(p_0 + p_1N_0 + p_2N_0^2 + p_3N_0^3)}{1 + \exp(p_0 + p_1N_0 + p_2N_0^2 + p_3N_0^3)}$$

Where  $N_e$  is the number of prey eaten;  $N_0$  is the initial number of preys,  $p_0$  is intercept,  $p_1$  is linear coefficient,  $p_2$  is quadratic coefficient and  $p_3$  is cubic coefficient. A true type I functional response is possible only when handling time is equal to zero and predators do not reach satiation point which seems to be an unrealistic situation. Significant negative and positive linear coefficients ( $p_1$ ) from the regression indicate type II or type III functional response, respectively<sup>20</sup>. The random predator equation<sup>21</sup> was used to describe the functional responses because it allows for prey depletion during the course of the experiment. The form of the equation is as follows:  $N_e = N_0 [1 - \exp(-aT_hN_e - aT)]$ .

Where  $N_e$  is the number of prey eaten per predator,  $N_0$  is the prey density offered,  $T$  is the duration of the experiment (24h),  $T_h$  is the handling time i.e. time required by the predator to pursue, kill and digest the prey and  $a$  is the predation coefficient or predators attack rate. The value  $a/T_h$  indicates the effectiveness of predator which was calculated by dividing  $a$  by  $T_h$  and maximum theoretical predation rate  $K = T/T_h$  was also calculated.

## Results and Discussion

### Developmental biology of *C. zastrowisillemi*

Mean duration of egg, larva, prepupa and pupa of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 2.60, 11.62, 1.10 and 8.30 days, respectively. The predator took 23.56 days to complete the development from egg to adult emergence (Table 1). The female and male longevity of *C. zastrowisillemi* on *A. gossypii* was recorded as 37.60 and 26.80 days, respectively. Each female on an average laid 398.9 eggs. The mean duration of pre-oviposition, oviposition and post-oviposition periods of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 3.6, 24.7 and 7.8 days, respectively.

### Feeding potential of *C. zastrowisillemi*

Data presented in Table 2 reveal that 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars of *C. zastrowisillemi* consumed on an average 30.66, 98.7 and 301.7 nymphs of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> stage of *A. gossypii*. The total consumption during the entire life cycle was 431.06 aphids. Number of aphids consumed per day by the respective instar was 10.96, 31.84 and 62.86. The feeding potential of the lace wing larvae increased with age. As the larva grew from 1<sup>st</sup> instar to 3<sup>rd</sup> instar, the number of aphids consumed per day increased from 10.96 to 62.86.

### Functional response of *C. zastrowisillemi*

Cubic polynomial fit between prey density offered ( $N$ ) and proportion of prey consumed ( $N_e/N$ ) by all the larval stages of the chrysopid resulted significantly negative linear coefficient thereby confirming a Type II functional response (Table 3). The mean number of aphids consumed by 1<sup>st</sup> instar of *C. zastrowisillemi* at the prey densities of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30

and 35 was 3.9, 6.5, 8.3, 9.5, 10.5, 10.6 and 10.9 aphids, respectively (Table 4). The maximum number of aphids consumed at the prey density of 35 (10.90) was statistically on par with the prey density of 30 (10.60 aphids) and 25 (10.50 aphids). The highest proportion of aphids consumed was at the prey density of 5 (78.00%) and lowest at the prey density 30 (35.33%).

The mean number of aphids consumed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> instar of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 8.9, 17, 24.2, 31.4, 37.7, 38.3 and 38.5 aphids at the prey densities of 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and 70, respectively. The number of aphids consumed at the prey densities of 50, 60 and 70 were significantly on par with each other (Table 5). The maximum proportion of the aphids consumed was at the prey density of 10 (89%) and minimum at the prey density of 70 (55%).

Data presented in Table 6 reveal that the mean number of aphids consumed by 3<sup>rd</sup> instar of *C. zastrowisillemi* at prey densities of 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120 and 140 was 18.80, 32.8, 47.2, 61.9, 63.5, 64.3 and 64.6 aphids, respectively. The number of aphids consumed was maximum at the prey density of 140 which was statistically on par with at prey densities of 120 and 100. Highest proportion of aphids consumed was at the prey density of 20 (94%) and lowest at the prey density of 140 (46.14%).

The predation efficiency of *C. zastrowisillemi* against *A. gossypii* increased with the advancement of the developmental stage of the predator which is numerically illustrated by parameters of attack rate (a) and handling time ( $T_h$ ) (Table 7). The attack rates for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars were 0.089, 0.111 and 0.140, respectively. These findings show that the attack rate of different instars of *C. zastrowisillemi* increased with the gradual increase in larval stages. The time of handling for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instar was 1.767, 0.367 and 0.269 h, respectively. Time of handling of different instars decreased with the advancement in growing stages. The minimum handling time was recorded for 3<sup>rd</sup> instar larva followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> instar larvae which may be due to higher movement of larger instars that lead to high attack rate. Maximum theoretical predation rate (K) estimated for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars were 13.6, 82.8 and 88.9 aphids, respectively.

## Discussion

The cotton aphid, *A. gossypii* is an important pest of many host plants belonging to over 80 families [2, 3] and is a vector of more than 30 plant viruses [15]. In the present study, incubation period was 2.6 days which is nearly same (2.25 days) to that recorded by [22]. The study also showed that larval duration of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 11.62 days, whereas, pre pupal and pupal period was 1.10 and 8.30 days, respectively. Similar to present study [23], recorded total larval duration of 9.65 days and pupal period of 9.43 days of *C. carnea* on *A. gossypii*. The present study also finds support of [18] who recorded total larval and pupal periods of 11.38 and 9.64 days, respectively of *Chrysoperla zastrowi arabica* on *A. gossypii*. Total duration from egg to adult emergence of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 23.56 days. The female and male longevity of *C. zastrowisillemi* on *A. gossypii* was 37.60 and 26.80 days, respectively. These findings were similar to the findings of [18] which showed that female longevity of *C. zastrowi arabica* with *A. gossypii* was 38.93 days and male longevity was 28.59 days. Adult females on an average laid 398.9 eggs/female. In present study, the mean duration of pre-oviposition, oviposition and post-oviposition periods of *C. zastrowisillemi* was 3.6, 24.7 and 7.8 days, respectively.

Similar to present results [18] also recorded pre-oviposition, oviposition and post-oviposition periods of *C. zastrowi arabica* 3.72, 25.54 and 8.47 days, respectively. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars of *C. zastrowisillemi* consumed 30.66, 98.7 and 301.7 aphids of *A. gossypii*. The feeding potential of the lace wing larvae increased with age, as the larva grew from 1<sup>st</sup> instar to 3<sup>rd</sup> instar, the number of aphids consumed per day increased from 10.96 to 62.86. This is because the larger size of larvae requires more food to satisfy hunger level and reach satiation. This is in accordance to earlier studies of [24] who observed that the daily feeding of *C. carnea* increased slowly during the first two instars and reached peak in the third larval instar. Similarly [25] recorded that larva of *C. carnea* consumed on an average 419.8 nymphs of *A. gossypii*. Khan *et al.* (2013) reported that 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instar larvae of *C. carnea* consumed  $61 \pm 1.97$ ,  $113.6 \pm 2.42$  and  $239.2 \pm 6.87$  aphids, respectively. The present findings were in line with the findings of [26] who recorded that mean consumption rate of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instar larvae of *C. carnea* with *A. gossypii* was 23, 122 and 205.6 aphids, respectively. Host plants on which the aphids fed might affect the quality of the aphids, which in turn, may affect the development, survival and predation of the predator. In this study, *C. zastrowisillemi* presented type-II functional response which is similar to several reports on the functional response in *C. carnea*, *C. rufilabris*, *C. externa* and *C. congrua* [27-31]. Although the type-III functional response represents the only response with regulating possibilities [32], in biological control programmes of ephemeral crops with augmentative release, regulating possibilities are not as important as in inoculative releases [28]. The proportion of aphids eaten increased at decreasing rate in higher aphid densities and the proportion of aphid eaten was not constant. In the present study, as the prey density increased, the number of aphids consumed by different instars of *C. zastrowisillemi* also increased (Table 4-6). Whereas, the proportion of the aphids consumed decreased with the increase in the prey density, which may be due to satiation levels of the predators. The results of present study were supported by the previous studies of [33, 34] who reported that as the prey density offered increased the proportion of aphids consumed decreased. The handling time is a feature of predatory behaviour and influences the functional response by decreasing the search and attack rates as prey density increases [28]. These findings show that the attack rate of different instars of *C. zastrowisillemi* increased with the gradual increase in larval stages. The time of handling for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instar was 1.767, 0.367 and 0.269 h, respectively. Time of handling of different instars decreased with the advancement in growing stages. Similar to present studies many workers have reported that attack rate coefficient (a) increased and handling time ( $T_h$ ) decreased during the development of the green lacewing (*C. carnea*) larvae against different species of aphids [33-35]. In the present findings, the advancement of growing stages caused higher attack rate and lower handling time which may be due to the increase in size, voracity, hunger level and walking speed of the predator. The handling time decreased over time and the attack coefficient increased which might be due to the larvae take time to acclimate to the new experimental arena and to a new type of prey. The results suggest that *C. zastrowisillemi* could be considered as a candidate for use in a commercial biological control agent for cotton aphid, *A. gossypii* from the view point of environmental safety and non-target effects could be avoided.

**Table 1:** Duration of developmental stages (days  $\pm$  SE) of *C. zastrowisillemi* reared on *A. gossypii*

Development Stage	<i>C. zastrowisillemi</i> (Days $\pm$ SE)
Incubation period	2.60 $\pm$ 0.16
1 <sup>st</sup> instar	2.80 $\pm$ 0.15
2 <sup>nd</sup> instar	3.10 $\pm$ 0.13
3 <sup>rd</sup> instar	4.80 $\pm$ 0.12
Total larval period	11.62 $\pm$ 0.26
Pre-pupa	1.10 $\pm$ 0.10
Pupa	8.30 $\pm$ 0.24
Egg-adult emergence	23.56 $\pm$ 0.25
Female longevity	37.60 $\pm$ 1.71
Male longevity	26.80 $\pm$ 0.95
Pre oviposition period	3.60 $\pm$ 0.39
Oviposition period	24.70 $\pm$ 1.69
Post oviposition period	7.80 $\pm$ 0.34
Fecundity (Eggs/female)	398.90 $\pm$ 10.58

**Table 2:** Feeding potential of different developmental stages of *C. Zastrowisillemi* against *A. gossypii*

Stage	Mean number of aphids Consumed		Mean number of aphids consumed/ day	
	Mean $\pm$ SE	Range	Mean $\pm$ SE	Range
1 <sup>st</sup> instar	30.66 $\pm$ 3.35	20-37	10.96 $\pm$ 0.48	10-13
2 <sup>nd</sup> instar	98.7 $\pm$ 3.73	85-106	31.84 $\pm$ 0.86	29-35
3 <sup>rd</sup> instar	301.7 $\pm$ 4.59	289-315	62.86 $\pm$ 0.90	61-68
Total consumption	431.06 $\pm$ 5.99	415-450	37.1 $\pm$ 2.36	29-43

**Table 3:** Parameters of polynomial regression between proportions of prey consumed (Na/N) and initial prey density (N) of *C. zastrowisillemi*

Predator stage	Parameter	Coefficient	t- value	p
		Mean $\pm$ S E		
1 <sup>st</sup> instar	P0	0.98 $\pm$ 0.02	42.59	< 0.001
	P1	-0.07 $\pm$ 0.006	-6.72	< 0.001
	P2	0.001 $\pm$ 0.0003	2.90	< 0.001
	P3	-0.000009 $\pm$ 5.6E-06	-1.69	< 0.001
2 <sup>nd</sup> instar	P0	0.98 $\pm$ 0.01	74.36	0.0012
	P1	-0.01 $\pm$ 0.002	-5.80	< 0.001
	P2	0.0002 $\pm$ 4.9E-05	4.35	< 0.001
	P3	-0.000002 $\pm$ 3.9E-07	-5.66	< 0.001
3 <sup>rd</sup> instar	P0	1.01 $\pm$ 0.019	51.75	< 0.001
	P1	-0.07 $\pm$ 0.0006	-7.63	< 0.001
	P2	0.00003 $\pm$ 5.6E-06	4.49	< 0.001
	P3	-0.0000001 $\pm$ 1.5E-08	-8.51	< 0.001

P0= Constant, P1= Linear coefficient, P2= Quadratic coefficient, P3= Cubic coefficient

**Table 4:** Functional response of 1<sup>st</sup> instar of *C. zastrowisillemi* to different densities of *A. gossypii*

Prey density	Mean number of aphids consumed (Mean $\pm$ SE)	Proportion of aphids consumed (%)
5	3.90 $\pm$ 0.10 <sup>f</sup>	78.00
10	6.50 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>e</sup>	65.00
15	8.30 $\pm$ 0.26 <sup>d</sup>	55.33
20	9.50 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>c</sup>	47.50
25	10.50 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>ab</sup>	42.00
30	10.60 $\pm$ 0.16 <sup>ab</sup>	35.33
35	10.90 $\pm$ 0.10 <sup>a</sup>	31.14
CD (p=0.05)	0.48	

**Table 5:** Functional response of 2<sup>nd</sup> instar of *C. zastrowisillemi* to different densities of *A. gossypii*

Prey density	Mean number of aphids consumed (Mean $\pm$ SE)	Proportion of aphids consumed (%)
10	8.90 $\pm$ 0.10 <sup>f</sup>	89.00
20	17.00 $\pm$ 0.15 <sup>e</sup>	85.00
30	24.20 $\pm$ 0.25 <sup>d</sup>	80.66
40	31.40 $\pm$ 0.37 <sup>c</sup>	78.50
50	37.70 $\pm$ 0.21 <sup>ab</sup>	75.40
60	38.30 $\pm$ 0.21 <sup>ab</sup>	63.83
70	38.50 $\pm$ 0.22 <sup>a</sup>	55.00
CD (p= 0.05)	0.65	



**Table 6:** Functional response of 3<sup>rd</sup> instar of *C. zastrowisillemi* to different densities of *A. gossypii*

Prey density	Mean number of aphids consumed (Mean ± SE)	Proportion of aphids consumed (%)
20	18.80 ± 0.20 <sup>f</sup>	94.00
40	32.80 ± 0.49 <sup>e</sup>	82.00
60	47.20 ± 1.01 <sup>d</sup>	78.67
80	61.90 ± 0.23 <sup>c</sup>	77.38
100	63.50 ± 0.22 <sup>ab</sup>	63.50
120	64.30 ± 0.26 <sup>ab</sup>	53.58
140	64.60 ± 0.22 <sup>a</sup>	46.14
CD (p= 0.05)	1.32	

**Table 7:** Parameters of functional response of *C. zastrowisillemi* to *A. gossypii* over 24 h period

Predator stage	Parameter				
	a ± SE	T <sub>h</sub> ± SE	a/T <sub>h</sub>	K	R <sup>2</sup>
1 <sup>st</sup> instar	0.089 ± 0.002	1.767 ± 0.035	0.05	13.60	0.957
2 <sup>nd</sup> instar	0.111 ± 0.002	0.367 ± 0.011	0.38	82.80	0.983
3 <sup>rd</sup> instar	0.140 ± 0.005	0.269 ± 0.007	0.52	88.90	0.981
CD (p= 0.05)	0.010	0.063			

a= Coefficient of attack rate, T<sub>h</sub>= Handling time, K= maximum theoretical predation rate, R<sup>2</sup>= Coefficient of determination

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