

# Skimmer

Yorkshire Branch Magazine 2010



[www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk)

## Notes from the Chair

Once again I find myself continuing in the role as Branch Chairman...aren't you getting bored of me yet?

Seriously though, I'm very honoured that you trust me enough to continue to run the group as I have for the past few years. However, 2009 did see some changes to the committee though, with Paul Ashton taking on the role of Secretary, in addition to his website duties. There was also a change of Treasurer, with Emma Marshall stepping into the breach. Thanks Paul & Emma.

Once again we will have an exciting range of field trips planned for your pleasure, hopefully covering all corners of Yorkshire, so please take advantage of your membership and pop along to join in the fun. We will also be attending various events, bringing along our display boards and promoting dragonflies to the general public. If you have an event near you, which you would like to attend on the Branch's behalf, please let me know so that you can borrow the displays. While we're on the subject of displays, if you spot a particularly eye-catching display board at any events you attend, please could you ask where they purchased it from and pass the details onto me, I would like to add another in case we need two for different events at each end of the county.

I would also like some ideas for items which we could sell at events, so if you spot any dragonfly themed items, give me a call on 01535 678334 (after 6pm).

My planned visit to Cheshire in 2009 didn't materialise because of the weather, but I did manage to find several Scarce Chasers on a visit to Sussex, when I popped down for a school reunion. So this year we've decided to organise a Branch field trip down the A1 to Woodwalton Fen NNR, Cambridgeshire, so Branch members can see these colourful beauties for themselves. Hopefully we won't have to wade through chest deep nettles to see them like I did in Sussex....ouch!

Do keep an eye on the Sightings page on the Branch website during the season to see what's about in your area, and please email your own sightings and pics to Paul at [vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk](mailto:vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk). The Branch website also needs more sites adding to the Locations page, so if you could spare the time to write down a few places where you visit, it would be really appreciated. All you need to note is how to access the site, grid reference, habitat type(s) and which species you've recorded there, Paul will do the rest.

There are some members who can present talks to other Natural History groups, but if you fancy the challenge yourself to promote dragonflies to a wider audience, we would be able to provide you with the necessary slides or computerised images for your talk.

Don't forget that if you need a lift to any of our events, please don't hesitate to contact me and I'll try to arrange something.

Happy dragonflying

Tom Hubball

## Minutes of the Indoor Meeting - 30th January 2010

Paul Ashton and Tom Hubball

### Present

Tom Hubball, Keith Gittens, Paul Ashton, Steve Warrillow, Bill Hall, Richard Shillaker, Chris Abbott, Miles Langthorne and Joan Archer.

### 1 Apologies for Absence

Jason Gregory, Brian & Jill Lucas, Emma Marshall, Dave Maston, Diane Wakelin, John Hume, Michael Wilcox, Barry Nattress, Jill Warwick, Sarah Mumford, Graham Featherstone, Peter Mill, Richard Perham, Fiona Plane, Steve Gould, Paul and Helen Dinsdale.

### 2 Minutes from Last Meeting

The Minutes from the AGM in October were read and approved.

### 3 Treasurer's Report

Steve read report on Emma's behalf.

Latest accounts were produced in September 2009 and there had been no activity on the account during the remainder of the year.

Currently have £467.79 in the account. We only need £100 business reserve in the bank to ensure sustainability.

Do we want to spend any money?

EM sent details of a Co-operative Community Group Account that we may consider setting up. TH was looking into the detail.

### 4 Membership/Secretary Report

At the time of the meeting there were 16 life members and 27 paid up current members. There were 25 members that had still to renew. Reminder to be sent out by e-mail, along with two by post to members who don't have e-mail. Anyone who doesn't respond to the final reminder e-mail will also be sent renewal forms by post.

### 5 Website Update

The website has been well received with over a 1000 unique hits per month during the height of the season.

PA appealed for good locations for sites away from VC61, all that was needed was a grid reference, access details and a list of species recorded on site.

PA stated that the website was for the group, if anybody had any other ideas about what they wanted to see on the site, then let him know via e-mail: [vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk](mailto:vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk)

Still work to do on the species pages. Detailed write-ups had been started for the damselflies, though later species pages needed to be brought up to the same standard. Once work comes to an end on another current project this would be the next focus point.

Species distribution maps and the National Atlas maps have been updated to display a more up to date data.

## 6 Skimmer

PA felt that with currently promised articles the 2010 Skimmer should be the biggest yet.

PA appealed for all articles to be submitted by the end of January. One or two articles were still awaited so the deadline was extended by two weeks.

## 7 Records

TH asked whether anyone had any records, which they haven't passed onto their local Recorder.

TH commented that once again, he had received relatively few records and reminded everyone that sightings need to be sent to their local Recorder by end of January.

## 8 Field Trips for 2010

See page 6

TH reminded everyone that Health and Safety forms should be filled out and a log of attendees taken at the start of any field trip. These need to be retained for 6 years.

## 9 BDS News

TH read out part of the latest BDS Update (Nov 09):

The BDS are looking for two Voluntary Officers, one to handle publicity, ideally with previous media experience, and the second to become the Society's fundraiser.

The BDS would also like volunteers to attend events, manning the BDS stand. Anyone interested in any of these posts should contact either Pam Taylor or Claire Install.

There was also a plea for more articles for the BDS Journal, please contact Peter Mill [gpmill@supanet.com](mailto:gpmill@supanet.com) to discuss whether your article would be suitable.

There was yet another request for volunteers to man the Dragonfly Centre at Wicken Fen. Volunteers should contact Lynn Curry on 01733 204286

KG gave a brief overview of what went on at the BDS Members Day in October.

Saturday 20 March, 2010

2010 - DRN Recorders Day.

The meeting will be held at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford, ST17 0WT.

Saturday, 23rd October 2010

BDS Members Day - Harper Adams University College, Telford, Shropshire - 10.00am

## 10 Next Meeting

AGM - 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010 (Venue to be confirmed)

## 11 AOB

KG had presented a talk to Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club at the end of last year which went very well.

SW had been contacted about a possible talk by Derwent Valley Conservation Group but they had not replied to his emails.

SW had also been contacted about the South Yorkshire Ponds Project and will be, hopefully, surveying a few ponds for them.

TH asked everyone to pass on any unwanted exuviae to SW so that he can build up a reference collection.

TH also reminded everyone that National Insect Week will be on 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June, with National Dragonfly Week being on 19<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June.

TH thanked KG for the use of his kitchen and closed the meeting so we could all enjoy the refreshments KG had provided.

### Vice-county recorders

<b>VC61</b> - Paul Ashton	vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk	01430 803005
<b>VC62</b> - Keith Gittens	vc62@brilliantemerald.wanadoo.co.uk	01347 824480
<b>VC63</b> - Tom Hubball	vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk	01535 678334
<b>VC64</b> - Helen Dinsdale	bds64recorder@blueyonder.co.uk	01535 653041
<b>VC65</b> - Tom Hubball	vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk	01535 678334

Please submit your records to the relevant recorder as soon as possible. Ideally all records for the current years should reach the recorders by the end of December for onward transfer to the British Dragonfly Society.

## 2010 Branch Field Trips

### Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Woodwalton Fen NNR, Cambridgeshire

**Leader/Contact:** Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm [vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Aim:** Yorkshire Branch of the BDS 'Awayday' to look for Scarce Chasers, however all BDS members are welcome to attend.

**Meet:** 10.45am at entrance to Woodwalton Fen NNR, Chapel Road, Ramsey Heights, PE26 2RS (TL235849). For full directions see Yorkshire Branch of the BDS website <http://www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk>.

**Requirements:** Bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing/footwear

### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Denso Marston Nature Reserve Open Day

**Leader/Contact:** Steve Warrillow [whirlygigwarrillow@gmail.com](mailto:whirlygigwarrillow@gmail.com)

**Aim:** An Open Day to celebrate the Nature Reserve where Steve is Warden.

**Meet:** 13.00 – 16.00.30am at Denson Marston Ltd, Otley Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD17 7JR (SE802971).

**Requirements:** Wear appropriate clothing/footwear.

### Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010

R.Dearne, Bolton upon Dearne, South Yorkshire

**Leader/Contact:** Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm [vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Aim:** To investigate the section of river between Old Moor RSPB and Bolton upon Dearne for Beautiful Demoiselle.

**Meet:** 10am at Old Moor RSPB Reserve car park: S73 0YF (SE422022).

From A1: Leave at Junction 37, follow the A635 towards Barnsley then follow the brown RSPB Old Moor signs.

From M1: Leave at Junction 36 following A61 Barnsley, then take A6195 (Doncaster) for approx 4 miles. After passing Morrisons, follow brown RSPB Old Moor signs.

**Requirements:** Bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing/footwear

### Saturday 3rd July 2010

R. Ure and R. Bain, Ballowfields LNR, North Yorkshire

**Leader/Contact:** Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm [vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Aim:** To investigate the dragonfly fauna on these rivers and possibly the R. Swale at Gunnerside too.

**Meet:** 10am at Ballowfields LNR car park on roadside between Askrigg and Carperby - approx DL8 4DW (SD987897).

**Requirements:** Bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing/footwear.

### Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Marfield NR, Masham, North Yorkshire

**Leader/Contact:** Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm [vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Aim:** To investigate the dragonfly fauna at this site. Please check out the Yorkshire Branch of the BDS website for further 2010 field trips <http://www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk>.

**Meet:** 10am at car park. Turn right one mile north of Masham on A6108. Take the track opposite Mile House Farm for 450 yards and turn right into parking area.

**Requirements:** Bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing/footwear.

### Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Tranmire Bogs and Goathland Tarn, North Yorkshire

**Leader/Contact:** Bill Hall 01642 823170 or 07753 66359

**Aim:** A joint walk, of approx 6.5 miles, with Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club to investigate the dragonfly fauna of the area.

**Meet:** 10.30am at Wheeldale Bridge on the Egton Bridge to Stape Road.

**Requirements:** Bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing/footwear.

### Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2010

Treeton Dyke, Treeton, South Yorkshire

**Leader/Contact:** Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm  
[vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Aim:** A walk around Treeton Dyke. Lesser Emperor was recorded at this site in 2009.

**Meet:** 10.00am by Treeton Cricket & Football Pavilion on Washfield Lane, Treeton, S60 5PU (SK431874)

**Requirements:** Bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing/footwear

## BDS - Yorkshire Branch Website

Check out the website for the latest news, first sightings of the year, field trip diary, contact details, dragonfly locations to visit and how to submit your records.

Lost a previous issue of Skimmer! All issues available to download for you to print.

[www.yorkshiredragonflies.co.uk](http://www.yorkshiredragonflies.co.uk)

## Field Trips and Events – 2009 Summary

Tom Hubball

### Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> March

#### Leeds Philosophical & Literary Society Science Fair – Leeds City Museum

Tom Hubball attended this event at the Leeds City Museum. There was a steady trickle through the doors but few people appeared to be interested in the various stands at the event. Unfortunately, we didn't generate any new members from it either.

### Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> May - Yorkshire Water Open Day - Tophill Low

Paul Ashton attended this event at Tophill Low Nature Reserve, Yorkshire Waters flagship reserve. A planned walk around the southern half of the site was planned for 1.30pm. With an early date in the season the species list wasn't going to be at its best. Despite this, the three people who took part in the walk managed to observe six species, including Common Blue, Azure, Blue-tailed and Large Red Damselfly. The highlights were good numbers of Four-spotted Chasers, and the target species Red-eyed Damselfly, with three immatures being found in the South Scrub area. Around 300 people attended the open day which gave free access to the reserve. There was much interest around our stand, with several application forms handed out, which generated at least one new member.

### Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> May - Yorkshire Branch – Broomfleet

Three members attended on what turned out to be an excellent day. The target species were Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense* and Variable Damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum* with the former species extremely scarce in Yorkshire and the latter currently only known to be present in this area. The early date made it easy to pick out Hairy Dragonflies as no other hawkfly species had emerged. Thirteen individuals were recorded, the first time that this species has been recorded in double figures in Yorkshire. The only downside was that due to the good weather, they were all active giving next to no photo opportunities. The supporting cast included good numbers of Variable Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly and lower numbers of Azure Damselfly, Red-eyed Damselfly and Four-spotted Chaser.

### Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June - Yorkshire Branch - Spurn

Steve Warrillow led this field trip with the target species being Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*. Attendees were not disappointed with a couple being seen along the ditch. Other highlights included Emperor Dragonfly and Four-spotted Chaser. Steve commented that Clubley's Scrape was now in a poor condition for dragonflies and had raised this concern with the Warden. He was informed that this area was now being managed for a rare species of moth.

### Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> July - Royal Entomological Society Insect Festival – York Museum Gardens

Tom Hubball took our display stand to this well attended event, on a very warm day, which highlighted the Branch's presence to the general public and local Natural History community. The Branch had a stand next to the British Dragonfly Society with Steve Prentice and Tom Hubball helping children make pipe-cleaner dragonflies. Tom stated that he thought that the RES are going to hold this event biannually.



### Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July - Yorkshire Branch – Otley Wetlands

Thirty-one people attended this field trip, 25 from Wharfedale Naturalists and 6 Yorkshire Branch members including a couple of new ones, which was nice.

The group had a very leisurely stroll around the Reserve, splitting into three different sections at one point. Thirteen species of dragonflies were seen. Eleven species of butterflies were also noted together with 2-Spot and Harlequin ladybirds, and two species of day flying moths; Chimney Sweeper and Straw Dot.

### Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July - Yorkshire Branch – Castle Howard Arboretum Gardens

Keith Gittens was involved with this joint event held with the Arboretum Trust. Seven Branch members attended the walk in the morning with 11 species being seen. Keith presented a successful talk to members of the public in the afternoon. The dragonfly display board has been erected now, but Keith was unsure whether the Branch contact details had been added, but thought that they probably had by now.

### Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> July - Yorkshire Branch – Timble Ings

Five Yorkshire Branch members attended this field trip. The target species being Golden-ringed Dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii*. Tom reported that attendees saw not one but two individuals. Yorkshire Water have created a ditch and added a couple of ponds beyond the stream and some exuviae were collected. These turned out to be both Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea* and Southern Hawker *A. cyanea*. The group met another couple of Branch members who had entered the site from a different direction but were unable to stay for the rest of the day. They confirmed that there was plenty of activity waiting ahead. The group carried on around the site finding several more Common Hawkers, an Emperor, Broad-bodied Chasers and several Common and Black Darters. We also saw Large Red, Common Blue, Blue-tailed and Emerald damselflies.

### Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> August - Yorkshire Branch – Strensall Common

Good weather prevailed as a total of five members attended this trip lead by Keith Gittens. They set out to investigate the various water bodies within the danger area of the firing range on the Common. It was fortuitous that the event coincided with a non firing day, thus allowing access to this otherwise restricted area. The day was memorable for the huge number of Black Darter *Sympetrum danae* seen. In total thirteen species of dragonfly were recorded.

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## Dragonfly Recording Network Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Tom Hubball

Keith Gittens, Paul Ashton and I met up at Potteric Carr and Keith drove us down to the Dragonfly Recording Network meeting at Brandon Marsh Nature Centre, Coventry.

As the Recorders assembled, we quickly grabbed a cup of tea before Steve Cham opened the meeting at 10:00 and introduced Steve Prentice who presented the first talk of the day.

He started off by updating us with what had been happening with the Dragonflies in Focus project. He bemoaned the lack of records he'd received and was looking to introduce on-line recording with both simple and more advanced forms available. Identification pics and notes would be available for guidance. Any records received would then be forwarded to the relevant vice-county recorder to verify before being accepted.

Dave Smallshire was next, presenting the case for a national monitoring scheme. He emphasised the need for robust, meaningful data and the need to collect this in a systematic way. The proposed system will be based on the Butterfly Conservation transect method. Full details on how this would work would be released later in the year.

Steve Prentice reappeared to demonstrate how the new AditSite-Darter recording software worked. The system appeared to be easy enough to enter lots of data, but also produce spectacular results, from a straightforward list of species at a particular site, to full blown maps, which should make the recorder's job very easy. It will also enable them to show people how their records can make a difference and provide them with a map of their local area, or nearby sites that they could visit, to encourage them to send in even more records. But the best thing about it is that it will be provided to vice-county recorders free of charge, the setup and testing costs kindly funded by the BDS.

The outgoing BDS Conservation Officer, Kat Parkes, continued with a talk on the role of a vice-county recorder, confirming that the core tasks were to be a focal point for records, to verify records submitted to them and to send verified record to the central database. Optional tasks would be data analysis, provide talks to other interested parties and to lead events to promote dragonflies in their area. Pam Taylor then provided a case study of what things she gets up to in Norfolk. There was then time for discussion of what the VCR role meant to us, the recorders, and how it fitted into our daily activities.

It was then time for lunch and as we chatted about the morning's talks we managed to browse through a version of the forthcoming damselfly exuviae guide and various regional and national atlases, the best example being, in my opinion, *Les Libellules de France, Belgique et Luxembourg* by Grand, D. and Boudot, J.P.

Steve Cham quietened the lunchtime hubbub with a discussion on the requirements of the National Atlas, opening it up to the floor to provide input into its design. These ideas would then be taken away to work on a draft design.

Pam Taylor then led a question and answer session on various items that the assembled throng raised. Subjects included BDS publicity, data flow to/from Biological Record Centres, data protection issues and when can *Anax imperator* be confirmed as a Scottish breeding species.

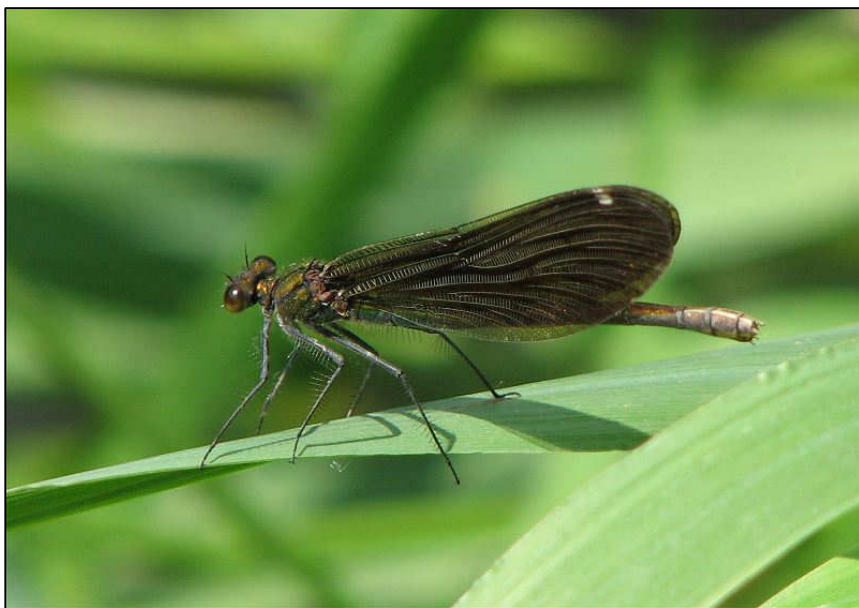
The meeting concluded at 16:15 and after making our goodbyes, we made the long drive back to Yorkshire.

## VC61 South-east Yorkshire 2009

Paul Ashton

With the National Atlas now well underway, I would like to appeal to members to send in their records away from the well watched areas of the vice-county. The Yorkshire Wolds by their nature are dragonfly poor, so records from garden ponds in this area are most likely to be the main source. A good idea is to watch out for village open garden weekends, this giving the opportunity to record at garden ponds usually out of bounds. I would also like to appeal for records from the Holderness area; the Tophill Low, Brandesburton Ponds and Leven Canal complex here is well recorded; however there are few records for Holderness away from these sites. The following is a brief summary of the main highlights for 2009.

**Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo*. Now recorded from ten 1km squares along the River Hertford and confluence with the River Derwent. The favoured areas are tree lined banks, long stretches of the river surveyed with open aspects held no adults, though areas with even just a handful trees appeared suitable. At one point a pair of males were observed sparing for well over an hour in the shade of the trees. There are still a handful of squares that could hold this species; however these are at fairly inaccessible places.



*Female Beautiful Demoiselle on the River Derwent at Ganton. Paul Ashton.*

**Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* was recorded for the first time at Saltmarshes Delph. An immature male was present on 28th July with up to 20 present during August. Despite first

making an appearance four years ago, it has still only been recorded from four sites; perhaps the summers have not been ideal for onward dispersal.

**Variable Damselfly** *Coenagrion pulchellum* still remains restricted to five 1km squares in the Broomfleet Ponds complex, one of these being new for 2009.

**Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense* continues its range expansion. Double figure counts were achieved in the Broomfleet area, with new sites discovered further north including Tophill Low Nature Reserve and Leven Canal. At Tophill Low this species has been suspected for several years. There have been inconclusive early season sightings of hawkers here, albeit all too brief to confirm identification. With **Southern Hawker** *Aeshna cyanea* emerging in mid-June at this site it has not always been possible to rule out this species.



Male Hairy Dragonfly at Broomfleet taken on the Yorkshire Branch field trip. Paul Ashton.

**Four-spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata* deserves a mention for its late date, when an adult was found in excellent condition at Skipwith Common on 26th September, this being around five weeks later than ever recorded. There were good numbers of this species at Skipwith this year with an impressive 204 recorded on 28th June.

Migrants in the form of **Red-veined Darter** *Sympetrum fonscolombii* put in an appearance at Hornsea Mere where up to six were present from 28th June to 5th July. At Spurn Point there were at least nine present on the 14th June with single figure counts on several dates thereafter, the last one on 16th August. A BDS Yorkshire Branch field trip managed to connect with this species at Spurn on 28th June.



*Male Red-veined Darter at Hornsea Mere. Paul Ashton.*

Another migrant that put in an appearance, and appeared to be scarce nationally this year, was **Yellow-winged Darter** *sympetrum flaveolum*, a male was photographed at Filey North Cliffe Country Park on 6th September.

Many thanks to all those who submitted their records for 2009, too many to mention in this short summary.

Up to date information and the latest sightings can be found at [www.erdragonflies.co.uk](http://www.erdragonflies.co.uk) and [www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk)

## **Annual General Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

Details of venue will be communicated nearer the time.

Do you know of any venues that could be suitable for holding group meetings in the future? If you do please get in touch with the Secretary as we would like to try some different venues, rather than rely on the small number we currently use.

## England's newest nature reserve cleared for take-off

### Natural England

#### WWII bomber base confirmed as one of England's top nature conservation sites

Natural England announced on 17th December 2009 that Skipwith Common in the heart of Yorkshire has been declared a National Nature Reserve, marking it out as one of the country's finest nature conservation sites.

The designation coincides with the 60th anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act - the ground-breaking legislation responsible for the creation of NNRs, National Parks and National Trails.

Poul Christensen, Chair of Natural England said: "An immense amount of work has gone towards ensuring that this much-loved landscape remains both a haven for wildlife, and a place that everyone can visit and enjoy. Skipwith Common is one of the best examples of lowland heath in the north of England and this declaration is a fitting way to mark the 60th anniversary of the Act that first brought National Nature Reserves into being."

Occupying 274 hectares within the Escrick Park Estate, Skipwith Common is of international importance for its wet and dry heathland, and is home to a wide variety of rare heathland plants and a rich collection of dragonflies and other invertebrates. There are over 70 species of breeding birds including nightjars and woodlarks, as well as large populations of great crested newts and water voles.

The Common also has a long cultural history - and is dotted with Bronze and Iron Age features - but its recent wartime use is probably the most notable. During the Second World War, parts of the site were used as an airfield where Halifax Bomber crews were trained, and extensive remains of the former Riccall Airfield are still clearly visible.

Over the years Skipwith Common has benefited from the careful management of its owner, the Escrick Park Estate, and in 2008 the Estate joined forces with Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship Scheme to support wildlife-friendly land management and conservation. A range of conservation measures are in place and old breeds such as Hebridean sheep, Longhorn cattle and Exmoor ponies help to stop scrub taking over the heath.

Charlie Forbes Adams of Escrick Park Estate said "Skipwith Common has been very special to me since I was a small boy and I am delighted that it is receiving the status it deserves. The Common is an oasis of biodiversity in the arable lands of Selby District and is a magical, almost primordial, place. We all hugely appreciate the resources Natural England has allocated to the Common in recent years".

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



## Skipwith Common National Nature Reserve

Paul Ashton

Visiting this site in high summer is something I always look forward to. With the whole site surrounded by woodland, there is always a sheltered area where dragonflies can be found, even in cold windy conditions. The woodland fringe also drowns out the surrounding traffic and views of the flat arable farmland. Once inside this inner sanctum, the habitat and species encountered are so out of keeping with the rest of the East Riding that you always feel that you have travelled to a far away county. Skipwith Common is a key site for a couple of species that are extremely scarce anywhere else in the Riding, offering an opportunity to observe and photograph them without having to travel to far, these are Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea* and Black Darter *Sympetrum danae*.

Most of my attention has focused around the north-eastern section of the open heath. In recent years mining subsidence has led to flashes forming. As these have developed, along with plenty of emergent vegetation growth, they had become a draw to breeding Common Hawkers and Black Darters. Unfortunately the mining subsidence has been causing concern, the increasing flooding having resulted in the loss of heathland. The decision was taken to reverse the effects of the flooding, and many people visiting the reserve in early 2009 were probably a little shocked by the scene of apparent devastation. Large scale drainage work had been undertaken through the winter months, and the scars of this work were unsightly. The work undertaken has only been done to remove the effects of flooding due to the mining subsidence; care has been taken to ensure that the rest of the historical ponds and mires have been left unaffected.



Visits later during the year showed that Black Darter numbers were low compared to previous years. Numbers did eventually pick up however, and three figure counts were collated later in the season, so the drainage doesn't seem to have had any detrimental effect on the dragonfly fauna.

Skipwith Common is well worth a visit, with the following species all being recorded in recent years:-

Emerald Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly, Azure Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Common Hawker, Migrant Hawker, Southern Hawker, Brown Hawker, Emperor Dragonfly, Four-spotted Chaser, Broad-bodied Chaser, Black-tailed Skimmer, Common Darter, Ruddy Darter and Black Darter.

## First Year of Dragonfly Recording

Graham Featherstone

2009 was my first year as a BDS (Yorkshire branch) member. I'm an enthusiastic wildlife photographer, and in the summer spend most Fridays roaming around moor and dale, mainly in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. I'm also a member of the Butterfly Conservation (Yorkshire branch) and record my sightings to them and the Forestry Commission, alongside any moths which I stumble upon. I knew next to nothing about dragonflies and damselflies, but over the winter months I had bought a book on them and studied the Yorkshire Branch Website diligently. I thought I was prepared for anything which I found on my forays into the wilds of North Yorkshire, but I was underestimating how difficult dragonflies and damselflies would be to identify.

My season started well, when on 30th of April I found a Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula* resting amongst vegetation at Ellerburn ponds in Dalby Forest. Even a beginner like me couldn't misidentify this one, despite never having seen one before. Things went surprisingly quiet for the next month or so, until one evening I disturbed a "proper" dragonfly at Fen Bog. Unfortunately it flew up a tree and I could only get a distant photo. This is where the magic of digital photography and our wonderful website come into their own; it was promptly identified as a Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*, a new one for me and the only one I saw all year. Two weeks later I saw my first Keeled Skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens* of the year, again at Fen Bog. I was pursuing a moth which I wanted to identify, when suddenly there was a whir of wings and a powder blue dragonfly grabbed my moth in mid air and flew off with it across the bog.

Probably the oddest behaviour I witnessed occurred at Ellerburn Pond on 4th of June. Common Blue Damselflies *Enallagma cyathigerum* were everywhere, and lots were in the process of emerging, but one particular adult caught my eye. It was on a tall reed munching the head of a newly emerged damselfly; quite shocking behaviour but I don't suppose cannibalism is that rare.

I took every opportunity to visit new local ponds, even spending a weekend of "open gardens" at Glaisdale. Here I saw my first Blue-tailed Damselflies *Ischnura elegans* and whilst fishing on the Esk at Grosmont I was watching Southern Hawkers *Aeshna cyanea* hunting midges along a quiet pool, when I spotted something a bit different. For once luck was on my side and I got a nice photo of my first Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis*, not a common sight on our river I'm sure.

Goathland Tarn was one of my favourite haunts over the summer months, it was here early one September morning that I witnessed nature at its most magical. There had been a heavy dew and everything was coated in tiny water droplets. As I approached the pond I noticed some small ghostly apparitions amongst the sieves, on closer inspection I was amazed to see several Black Darters *Sympetrum danae* roosting motionless covered in dew. Unbelievably 30 minutes later the sun did its magic and the Black Darters were flitting about looking for breakfast, alongside the Small Copper butterflies, which had undergone the same magical process.

But all too soon my first season was over, with my final sighting on October 4th at Fen Bog, where 4 Black Darters *S. danae* were seen enjoying some late Autumn sun having already survived two frosty nights.



I thoroughly enjoyed searching for Dragonflies and Damsels in my local area in 2009 and I can't wait to get going in 2010. I just hope by then I can tell the difference between Common Blue, Blue-tailed and Azure Damselflies, but that's very unlikely. Not to worry I know some experts and a wonderful website which are very helpful.



*Male Black Darter covered in early morning dew at The Tarn, Goathland. Graham Featherstone.*

### **Small Red-eyed Damselfly moves to Scarborough!**

As far as I am aware this is the first time *Erythromma viridulum* has been recorded in VC62 and North Yorkshire. Two individuals were reported by John Harwood, at a new pond on an industrial estate near Scarborough. The pond has typical habitat for the species having a covering of blanket weed, both sexes were recorded on the 11<sup>th</sup> August. It will be interesting to see whether there are further records in 2010.

Keith Gittens

## Old records of dragonflies in Yorkshire and Humberside

Richard Shillaker

I made use of a wet day during a week's holiday in North Yorkshire by visiting the Helmsley offices of the North Yorks Moors National Park to note down old records of dragonflies in our region published by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC). These records are contained in Invertebrate Site Register report Number 82 (dated 1987) by Roger Key entitled "Rare and notable species in Yorkshire and Humberside: species ecology and site occurrence". Two related Invertebrate Site Register reports (dated 1987) were also consulted: reports for North Yorkshire and for North Yorkshire-East.

### 1. Background information on the Invertebrate Site Register (ISR)

The following background to the ISR project is based largely on information kindly provided to me recently by Dr Key.

The aim of this NCC initiative was to identify sites of potential significance for the conservation of invertebrates throughout the UK, based on a combination of the presence of significant assemblages (either taxonomic or ecological), and individual species or groups of species then thought to be nationally or regionally scarce or rare. Sites were graded on the basis mainly of the number of 'rare' invertebrate species of national or regional importance (ranging from Red Data Book species to 'Regionally Notable' species). Five grades of site were identified: A (sites considered to be of National importance), B (of Regional importance), C (showing potential but insufficient data), D (unlikely to be of national or regional significance, but may be of local value) and? (insufficient data for assessment).

Odonata were apparently singled out for some special treatment, based on the number of species considered to comprise an 'outstanding assemblage' together with the presence of species then considered to be nationally or regionally scarce. It is noted that the status of a number of these species has changed considerably since those assessments were made. 'Outstanding assemblages' were regionalised based on the work of Dr Margaret Palmer and later included in 'Guidelines for the Selection of Sites of Special Scientific Importance' (NCC 1989). In the NCC system of 1989 an 'outstanding assemblage' in Yorkshire comprised at least 10 species, as compared with 15 for Kent or 17 for Hampshire.

Dr Key has clarified that comprehensive data were not available at the time of the ISR project. "We relied on local specialists to tell us which were the sites they considered to be most important and supply data on those – as well as giving us as many records as they were prepared to give of the scarcer species. Common species couldn't be taken into account (the data were too numerous even then) other than when assessing 'outstanding assemblages' based on the number of species. Indeed there would have been little point in doing so, given the objective of the project."

It is noteworthy that one of the grade A sites mentioned below, Skipwith Common, was declared a National Nature Reserve in 2009.

## 2. ISR report for North Yorkshire

The following dragonfly summary is included in the 1987 Invertebrate Site Register for North Yorkshire.

"A relatively well recorded group by many naturalists in the county and one continually gaining in popularity. Y.N.U. records are held by Stuart Foster of Doncaster. *Orthetrum caeruleum* (Nb) from Upper Langdale and Fen Bog is the only species of national importance currently recorded from our county, although there are old records of *Brachytron pratense* and *Coenagrion pulchellum* (both Nb). *Calopteryx virgo* and *C.splendens* (both regionally notable) are distinctly rare in the north. The former species, widespread in south western Britain, is a very rare species in Europe as a whole. It occurs in the upper Derwent and in Pickering Beck, and *C.splendens* in the Derwent and the Wharfe."

[Nb = Nationally notable, known from, or considered likely to occur in, 100 or fewer 10 km squares of the National Grid.]

## 3. ISR report on 'rare and notable species' in Yorkshire and Humberside

In the 'rare and notable species' report, a total of 18 dragonfly species are listed for Yorkshire and Humberside, see the first table below. The absence of some common species is clearly demonstrated by the Variable Damselfly being the only blue damselfly listed.

Subsequent tables provide more information on the species reported at just 1-3 sites (9 species) and at 4-10 sites (5 species). Most records are from Yorkshire. In some cases it is not clear if the record is from South Yorkshire or from North Lincolnshire e.g. records from Thorne/Crowle Moors. Records clearly from North Lincolnshire are presented in *italics*. Watsonian vice-county numbers are provided for the Yorkshire records.

Common name	Scientific name	Number of sites	Dates
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	13	1953-1985
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	6	1975-1984
Scarce Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes dryas</i>	1	1961
Variable Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>	7	1926-1985
Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>	8	1970-1985
Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	12	1974-1985
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	9	1974-1985
Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	1	1985
Hairy Dragonfly	<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	3	1945-1986
Golden-ringed Dragonfly	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	5	1963-1985
White-faced Darter	<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i>	1	1908
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	3	1940-1974
Scarce Chaser	<i>Libellula fulva</i>	1	1909
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	11	1945-1985
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	1	1986
Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	2	1985
Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	15	1945-1985
Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	1	1970

Summary of dragonfly records for Yorkshire and Humberside from the ISR

### 3.1 Species recorded in ISR at 1-3 locations

#### Scarce Emerald Damselfly

Site	Grid Ref.	Date	Site Grade	Site No.
<i>Black Walk Nook (North Lincs)</i>	SE9102	1961	C	65/22

#### Emperor Dragonfly

<i>Messingham Sand Quarry (North Lincs)</i>	SE9003	1985	B	65/13
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#### Hairy Dragonfly

Askham Bog (Nr York)	SE5748 (VC64)	1945	A	78/1
<i>Messingham Sand Quarry (North Lincs)</i>	SE9003	1986	B	65/13
Shirley Pool/Rushy Moor (Nr Doncaster)	SE5612 (VC 63)	1975	B	76/13

#### White-faced Darter

Thorne/Crowle Moor (SouthYorks/North Lincs)	SE71(VC63/N Lincs)	1908	A	76/2
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#### Broad-bodied Chaser

Skipwith Common (Nr Selby)	SE63 (VC 61)	1940	A	78/2
Shirley Pool/Rushy Moor (Nr Doncaster)	SE5612 (VC 63)	1974	B	76/13
Thorne/Crowle Moor (South Yorks/North Lincs)	SE71 (VC 63/N Lincs)	1966	A	76/2

#### Scarce Chaser

Shirley Pool/Rushy Moor (Nr Doncaster)	SE5612 (VC 63)	1909	B	76/13
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#### Black-tailed Skimmer

<i>Messingham Sand Quarry (North Lincs)</i>	SE9003	1986	B	65/13
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#### Keeled Skimmer

Fen Bog (North York Moors)	SE854975 (VC 62)	1985	B	77/10
Langdale (North York Moors)	SE99 (VC 62)	1985	B	77/14

#### Ruddy Darter

Shirley Pool/Rushy Moor (Nr Doncaster)	SE5612 (VC 63)	1970	B	76/13
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### 3.2 Species recorded in ISR at 4-10 locations

#### Beautiful Demoiselle

Brandesburton Gravel Pits (East Yorkshire)	TA0947 (VC61)	1975	?	65/67
River Derwent (North Yorkshire)	(VC61/62)	1979	B	78/8
Forge Valley NNR(Nr Scarborough)	SE9887 (VC 62)	1979	B	77/11
Langdale (North York Moors)	SE99 (VC 62)	1980	B	77/14
Lowdales (North York Moors)	SE9591 (VC 62)	1984	C	77/37
Newtondale (North York Moors)	SE88 (VC 62)	1978	B	77/15

### Variable Damselfly

Site	Grid Ref.	Date	Site Grade	Site No.
Pocklington Canal (East Yorkshire)	SE74 (VC 61)	1985	B	65/14
<i>River Torne (North Lincs)</i>	<i>SE80</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>?</i>	<i>65/98</i>
Askham Bog (Nr York)	SE5748 (VC 64)	1926	A	78/1
<i>Messingham Sand Quarry (North Lincs)</i>	<i>SE9003</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>65/13</i>
Hatfield Moor (SouthYorks/North Lincs)	SE7000 (VC 63/N Lincs)	1930-1940	A	76/1
Shirley Pool/Rushy Moor (Nr Doncaster)	SE5612 (VC 63)	1974	B	76/13
Wiltorpe Marsh (Nr Barnsley)	SE3308 (VC 63)	1981	C	76/61

### Red-eyed Damselfly

<i>Ashbyville (North Lincs)</i>	<i>SE919084</i>	<i>1980-</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>65/19</i>
Brandesburton Gravel Pits (East Yorkshire)	TA0947 (VC 61)	1975	?	65/67
<i>Crowle Brick Pits (North Lincs)</i>	<i>SE7711</i>	<i>1980-</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>65/27</i>
Leven Canal (East Yorkshire)	SE04 (VC 61)	1980	B	65/11
Pocklington Canal (East Yorkshire)	SE74 (VC 61)	1970-	B	65/14
Chesterfield Canal area	SK58 (VC 63)	1985	C	76/24
Nickerwood Ponds Nr Aston South Yorkshire)	SK4684 (VC 63)	1978	?	76/96
Norwood Wood (Nr Woodall South Yorkshire)	SK4781 (VC 63)	1985	C	76/43

### Migrant Hawker

Pocklington Canal (East Yorkshire)	SE74 (VC 61)	1985	B	65/14
<i>Messingham Sand Quarry (North Lincs )</i>	<i>SE9003</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>65/13</i>
Denaby Ings (Nr Doncaster)	SE4900 (VC 63)	1985	B	76/6
Hatfield Moor (South Yorks/ North Lincs)	SE7000 (VC 63/N Lincs)	1983	A	76/1
Shirley Pool/Rushy Moor (Nr Doncaster)	SE5612 (VC 63)	1974	B	76/13
Sprotborough Gorge (Nr Doncaster)	SE5301 (VC 63)	1985	B	76/14
Thorpe Marsh (Nr Doncaster)	SE5809 (VC 63)	1985	C	76/54
Wiltorpe Marsh (Nr Barnsley)	SE3308 (VC 63)	1983	C	76/61
Thorne/Crowle Moor (South Yorks /North Lincs)	SE71 (VC 63/N Lincs)	1985	A	76/2

### Golden-ringed Dragonfly

Fen Bog (North York Moors)	SE854975 (VC 62)	1965-75	B	77/10
Hookstone Wood Ponds (Nr Harrogate)	SE321543 (VC 64)	1985	?	78/77
Agden Bog (Nr Sheffield)	SK2593 (VC 63)	1979	B	76/3
Lower Rivelin Valley (Nr Sheffield)	SK3187 (VC 63)	1963	?	76/94
Don Banks, Thrybergh (Nr Rotherham)	SK49 (VC 63)	1984	C	76/29

#### 4. ISR (pre 1987) records compared with current Yorkshire dragonfly distribution

In the following table ISR (pre 1987) records are compared with the current Yorkshire distribution of these species (as kindly provided, with comments, by Tom Hubball the VC 63 and 65 dragonfly recorder). The limited and different nature of the two data sets means that any comparison needs to be regarded with caution. However the scarcity of ISR records for the Emperor Dragonfly and Ruddy Darter is notable.

The ISR records for Scarce Emerald Damselfly, Scarce Chaser and Variable Damselfly are particularly interesting. In order to verify the authenticity of ISR records for these three species it would be helpful to know whether any specimens were retained in museum collections; if anyone has such information please e-mail Tom at [vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk)

ISR (pre 1987) records compared with current Yorkshire distribution of these species

Species	ISR records for Yorkshire and Humberside	Current distribution in Yorkshire	Comments
<b>Species at few (1-3) sites in ISR report</b>			
Scarce Emerald Damselfly	N Lincs	Not currently recorded in any Yorkshire vice-county.	Nationally rare. Known colonist of coastal and estuarine marshes. Not currently recorded in Lincs, see <a href="http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/species/dragonfly_damselfly/index.php">http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/species/dragonfly_damselfly/index.php</a>
Emperor Dragonfly	N Lincs	Widespread in south of county but more local in north.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties suggesting a massive range expansion from south to north.
Hairy Dragonfly	N Lincs, VC63, VC64	Rare and localized.	Nationally scarce. The stronghold still remains around Doncaster area in VC63 but recent sightings in VC61 suggest possible range expansion or, more likely, translocation of eggs/larvae.
White-faced Darter	VC63/N Lincs	Not currently recorded in any Yorkshire vice-county.	Nationally scarce. Possible re-introduction to Thorne/Crowle Moors by Natural England in future.
Broad-bodied Chaser	VC61, VC63, VC63/N Lincs	Widespread but local.	Commonest in VC61 and VC63. Fewer records from VC64 and even less from VC62. No records from VC65.
Scarce Chaser	VC63	Not currently recorded in any Yorkshire vice-county.	Nationally rare. Not currently recorded in Lincs, see <a href="http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/species/">http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/species/</a>

			<a href="http://dragonfly_damselfly/index.php">dragonfly_damselfly/index.php</a>
Black-tailed Skimmer	N Lincs	Widespread in suitable habitat.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties but still uncommon in VC62.
Keeled Skimmer	VC62	Rare.	Still confined to sites in VC62, with Fen Bog still being the dominant site.
Ruddy Darter	VC63	Widespread but local.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties.
<b>Species at several (4-10) sites in ISR report</b>			
Beautiful Demoiselle	VC61, VC62	Very rare in VC61 & VC62.	Only recorded from R. Hertford, R. Derwent and Sea Cut, Scarborough.
Variable Damselfly	N Lincs, VC61, VC63, VC64	Rare and localized in VC61. One record from VC64.	Nationally scarce. Record from VC64 relates to individual found on front grill of vehicle.
Red-eyed Damselfly	N Lincs, VC61, VC63	Localised in VC61, very rare in VC63 & VC64. Not recorded from VC62 or VC65.	Main sites centered around canals in VC61, Brandesburton Ponds and Broomfleet.
Migrant Hawker	N Lincs, VC61, VC63	Widespread but rarely recorded in VC65.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties but breeding records required for VC62 and VC65.
Golden-ringed Dragonfly	VC62, VC63, VC64	Widespread but very localised.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties but the strongholds remain in North York Moors NP and areas surrounding the Yorkshire Dales NP.
<b>Species more widespread (11-15 sites) in ISR report</b>			
Banded Demoiselle	VC61-65	Widespread and common in suitable habitat.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties.
Brown Hawker	N Lincs, VC61, VC63, VC64, VC64/65	Widespread but rarely recorded in VC65.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties but bulk of records come from VC61, VC63 and VC64.
Four-spotted Chaser	N Lincs, VC61, VC62, VC63, VC64	Widespread but rarely recorded in VC65.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties. Can be abundant in suitable habitat.
Black Darter	N Lincs, VC61, VC62, VC63, VC64	Widespread but rarely recorded in VC65.	Now recorded from all five vice-counties. Can be abundant in suitable habitat.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Polly Millington of North York Moors National Park for making the ISR records available to me. I also wish to thank Roger Key and Tom Hubball for their considerable contributions to this article.



## In search of the Magnificent Emperor

Keith Gittens

So with June and I having our first successful trip to Bulgaria for dragonflies under our belt in 2007, the decision was where to go in 2008? One place that stood out was Turkey and the area around Lake Koycegiz. Here around 50 species of dragonfly have been recorded. The question was how to go? There was an organised trip but more importantly a guide had just been published about the dragonflies of the area. This guide by Paul Hope, a naturalist who had lived in Turkey for some time, proved the inspiration for our trip and after various communications with Paul via email and a little more research everything fell in to place. We would do it ourselves with Paul's invaluable guide.

Lake Koycegiz is in eastern Mugla province, South West Turkey. Here east meets west in dragonfly fauna terms, with some species being at the western edge of their Asiatic range. One species in particular stood out – *Anax immaculifrons* (Magnificent Emperor), a large and striking Asiatic species of rocky streams.

Flights are relatively easy to get to Dalaman, the closest airport. The best place to stay is the resort of Dalyan, which lies between Lake Koycegiz, the Dalyan delta and the spectacular Iztuzu turtle beach, all of which can be explored by boat.



*Lindenia tetraphylla* (Bladetail)

Lake Koycegiz is large and has a limited dragonfly fauna, but is fed by many streams and rivers and it is these that would become the focus of our efforts, together with some sites a little further away. Of the species found on the lake one is most striking the only member of its genus, the large gomphid –



*Lindenia tetraphylla* (Bladetail). Taking a boat out on to the lake you could easily see the large distinct exuvia clinging to reed stems as well as the adult males holding territories. The other species to be seen here is one that I have discovered to be extremely common across Europe - *Erythromma lindenii* (Goblet-marked Damselfly).

So after exploring the local area by boat, which by the way gave us good sightings of loggerhead turtles, little bittern, roller and short-toed eagle, we hired a car to explore the many sites suggested in Paul's book and see if we could find the Magnificent Emperor. The problem with Turkey is that a lot of Paul's maps of roads are not roads but dirt tracks and can be rough going, but if you persevered you usually found what you were looking for.



***Trithemis festiva* (Indigo Dropwing)**

The site for Magnificent Emperor is a picnic spot where locals bathe in the plunge pool of a waterfall. Alas our visit proved unsuccessful for our target but did produce some other striking species including *Trithemis festiva* (Indigo Dropwing). This is an Asiatic species at the western edge of its range, unlike its cousin - *Trithemis annulata* (Violet Dropwing), which occurs all round the Mediterranean and we were to see at a number of sites. The star of this stream however, turned out to be one we had missed in Bulgaria, the large and unusual damselfly – *Epallage fatime* (Odelisk), both males and

females were present at the site and it was relatively easy to photograph after a bit of a scramble amongst the rocks.



***Epallage fatime* (Odelisk)**

If you like eating and dragonfly watching at the same time, the place to visit is the trout farms on the Yuvarlakcay River. Here you can sit traditional Turkish style on shady platforms suspended over the river eating trout and chips while *Caliaeschna microstigma* (Shady Hawker) and *Calopteryx virgo festiva* (a sub-species of Beautiful Demoiselle) flit by!! However if you are really lucky you may see one of the two *Corduleagaster* species present in this part of Turkey – *Corduleagaster picta* (Turkish Golden-ringed) or *Corduleagaster insignis* (Blue-eyed Golden-ringed) and to top it all you are out of the scorching 30+ deg.C heat with cool crystal clear water rushing beneath you!!

While I could go on for some time, I think this gives you an idea of the potential of the area. In total we managed 30 species including another eastern species the less than typical skimmer – *Orthetrum sabina* (Slender Skimmer) – it isn't blue!! We never did find the Magnificent Emperor, although we knew it had been seen a week earlier, so perhaps one day a return trip.

## Request from the Editor

This magazine is produced for the members, containing articles by the members. Please consider writing just one article during the year for inclusion in the next edition. If the subject interests you, it will be of interest to other members of the group. Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue, our biggest to date. Hope you enjoy the read. Paul Ashton.

## Species list for Yorkshire

Latin Name	Common Name	Status in Yorkshire
<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Beautiful Demoiselle	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Banded Demoiselle	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Emerald Damselfly	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Lestes dryas</i>	Scarce Emerald Damselfly	Rare Vagrant
<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	Large Red Damselfly	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Erythromma najas</i>	Red-eyed Damselfly	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Azure Damselfly	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Common Blue Damselfly	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Blue-tailed Damselfly	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Ceragrion tenellum</i>	Small Red Damselfly	Aberrant Vagrant
<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>	Variable Damselfly	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	Common Hawker	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Migrant Hawker	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Southern Hawker	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	Brown Hawker	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Aeshna isosceles</i>	Norfolk Hawker	Aberrant Vagrant
<i>Anax imperator</i>	Emperor Dragonfly	Uncommon Resident Breeder
<i>Anax parthenope</i>	Lesser Emperor	Scarce Migrant
<i>Hemianax ephippiger</i>	Vagrant Emperor	Rare Migrant
<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	Hairy Dragonfly	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Golden-ringed Dragonfly	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Cordulia aenea</i>	Downy Emerald	Rare Vagrant
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Chaser	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Libellula fulva</i>	Scarce Chaser	Scarce Ex-Resident
<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Broad-bodied Chaser	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Black-tailed Skimmer	Uncommon Resident Breeder
<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	Keeled Skimmer	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Common Darter	Abundant Resident Breeder
<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Red-veined Darter	Scarce Resident Breeder
<i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i>	Yellow-winged Darter	Scarce Migrant
<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	Ruddy Darter	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	Black Darter	Common Resident Breeder
<i>Sympetrum vulgatum</i>	Vagrant Darter	Rare Migrant
<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i>	White-faced Darter	Scarce Ex-Resident

### Key

**Abundant** - Occurs in all suitable habitats.

**Common** - Occurs in nearly all suitable habitats, with some areas sparsely used.

**Uncommon** - Occurs regularly, but uses little of the suitable habitat.

**Scarce** - Occurs regularly, but in very small numbers.

**Rare** - Beyond its normal geographic range, only recorded once or twice a decade.

**Aberrant** - Far from its normal range. Confirmed sighting but further observations unlikely.

**Resident Breeder** - Present throughout the year.

**Migrant** - Non-resident - typical migrant species (confirmed breeding may have been recorded).

**Vagrant** - Lone non-resident adult recorded

**Ex-Resident** - Historic resident/migrant not recorded for many years

## The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's River Hull Wetlands Project

Jon Traill – Conservation Project Manager

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

In November 2008 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust began an ambitious 2 ½ year funded programme of works under the heading of 'The River Hull Wetlands – After the Floods'. The funding came from Natural England's Countdown 2010 biodiversity fund with matched funding from a landfill tax award from Biffa.

The main focus of the project was to look at the River Hull catchment in the East Riding of Yorkshire and city of Hull and work on three main objectives. These were:

1. Habitat and species mapping and monitoring – to look at what areas of semi natural habitats remained and opportunities for habitat creation as well as spatially mapping species distribution for target wetland species including water vole, otter and great crested newt and any invasive plant and animal species.
2. Public engagement and awareness raising of the importance of the river and its associated wetland habitats for wildlife. A programme of events, volunteer task days, guided walks and talks enable people of all ages to learn about the wide variety of habitats and species present in the river valley.
3. Practical habitat creation, enhancement and improvement of wetland habitats across the area will enable species to move more freely through the landscape whilst also directly creating or restoring new areas of wetland.

It is the third objective that forms the focus for this article, with new wetland habitat not only being created for the 'target' species, but also benefitting a wide variety of other species including damselflies and dragonflies.

Over the last year a total of four existing ponds have been worked on with the aim to bring them back into favourable management. To do this a targeted survey of the pond is carried out to see what features of interest remain, as well as looking for indicator or protected plant and animal species. All of the ponds thus far have been overgrown and drying or dried out completely. The dominant species include willow and bramble with hawthorn and nettle also often present. They are all farm ponds which at one time would have been an important resource and focal point for the farm – watering holes for livestock, wheel washing areas for carts and a source of food (fish and waterfowl). Today these ponds are being restored from a wildlife perspective and plans that are drawn up with the landowner reflect this. Unless the landowner wishes to enlarge the pond substantially we try to retain the overall character, size and shape of the original pond. By creating areas of differing water depths we hope to encourage as wide a range of species as possible – from frogs and toads, through to water voles and a wide range of invertebrates.

We have also been working hard to create new areas of wetland for wildlife and have created two new ponds at one site on the edge of North Frodingham village and a network wetland mosaic site on the edge of Foston-on-the-Wolds village, both close to the market town of Driffield. These new areas create extra offline habitat close to the river Hull headwater chalk streams of the area and are an

important addition to the area of wetland habitat, providing refuge for a myriad of species. Work is ongoing this year to monitor the development of the sites with some targeted planting due, to create a new area of wet woodland alder, willow carr.

When designing and creating new areas with landowners we try to maximise the potential for as wide a spectrum of species as possible, with deep pools to retain some water on site at all times, mixed with shallower areas with long drawdown zones where the water slowly retreats – good for invertebrates and wading birds such as snipe. If possible we also create some areas of steep sided banks for potential kingfisher burrows and water voles.



The photographs to the left show some of the work carried out so far.

New ponds being created at North Frodingham. These are now full with water, depths ranging from a few centimetres to 1.5 metres at its deepest.



New wetland mosaic habitat at Foston-on-the-Wolds, with an interconnected network of pools, scrapes and ponds. Water levels can be altered through a network of pipes. A smaller dipping pond has also been created to use as an education area for children. Wet woodland alder willow carr will be created adjacent to the existing area of woodland, creating an extension to this habitat.

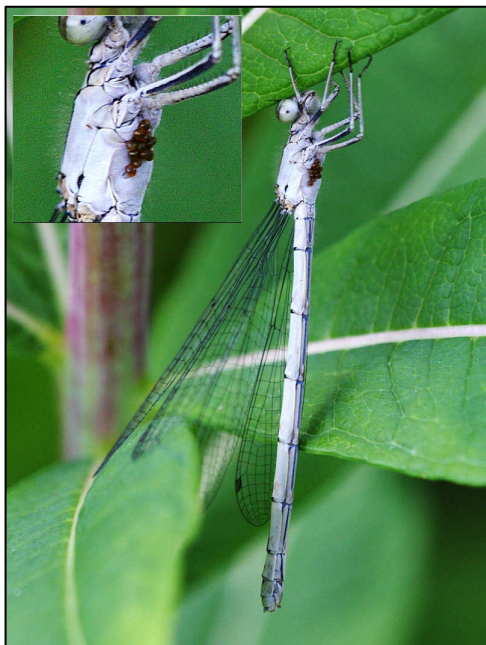
As we move into the next season, we have several more sites planned for new wetlands and ponds as well as the restoration of a further three existing ponds. Slowly the aim is to create a patchwork of sites across the river catchment from Driffield in the north to the city of Hull in the south. This network will be hugely important for all our wetland reliant species for many years to come.



## Unusual Sightings and Behaviour

Paul Ashton

### Parasitism



Paul Brothers sent in this photograph of a parasitised Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*. This observation was from a private quarry near Thornton-le-Dale on 12th June 2009. It shows small red mites on the underside of the thorax. It would appear that these mites are fairly common on *odonata*, especially *zygotera*. It is likely that the mites in the photograph were probably present on the larvae, transferring to the adult on emergence. The presence of these mites will have an effect on the fitness of the individual as they consume fluids from the body. As the adult damselfly matures and visits water the mites will drop off to complete their life cycle. The most commonly found mites are water mites which attach themselves to the body as *odonata* emerge, or in some species, as they visit water to oviposit. They can also be parasitised by flies; in this case the mites usually attach themselves to the wings or wing bases.

### Cannibalism



Graham Featherstone sent in this photograph showing a male Common Blue Damselfly *E. cyathigerum* consuming one of its congeners. In this case it appears to be a pre-flight emergent which would not have had chance to evade capture. It's not uncommon to see damselflies being predated by their larger dragonfly cousins, though sightings of damselflies predated themselves are not so common. This observation was made at Ellerburn Bank Nature Reserve on 5th June 2009.

## Predation

John Harwood found up to six male Black Darters *Sympetrum danae*, apparently trying to enter small pencil sized holes in dried up pond margins in Harwood Dale Forest.

Steve Cham replied with an answer to this odd behavior, supplying a couple of links on the internet with similar incidents involving Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* and Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*.

It appears that Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris* larvae are the culprits, catching the darters unaware and pulling them down in to their burrows. With so many males being involved however, it could be possible that the darters see movement at the top of the burrow, and try to catch what they believe are flies on the surface, only to become prey themselves.

Details of the other observations can be found on the news page of the Yorkshire Branch Website.



## Predator and Prey

Andrew Ashworth sent in this photo of a Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* at Broomfleet Washlands. The prey item is a female Common Darter *S. striolatum*. The hawker proceeded to consume the whole of the abdomen, apparently sucking it in like spaghetti, along with part of the wing bases before flying off.

Share your unusual sightings or behaviour by sending them in to the secretary at [vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk](mailto:vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk) for inclusion in next year's magazine.



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Front Cover Photo: Male Migrant Hawker at Spurn. Michael Flowers.

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