

# Skimmer

Yorkshire Branch Magazine 2013



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

## Notes from the Chair

What a challenging year 2012 turned out to be, the British weather doing its best to wash out the final atlas recording effort and our outdoor events. However, between the downpours some events did prove successful and we did manage some records.

Most records should now be in, so as you read this, the BDS Atlas will be being compiled and we look forward to seeing it later this year. An appropriate moment perhaps, to thank all those who have contributed records to the atlas over the last five years.

The launch of Dragonfly Week at Rodley Nature Reserve proved a success despite the cool showery weather with a good turn out of people and a number of species seen.

While outdoor activity may have been limited, indoor activity for me has been at an all time high with a number of talks and ID sessions throughout the year to various wildlife groups, one as far away as Newcastle. The benefit has been over £200 raised towards our local group and the BDS, plus we have gained some new recorders!

At the last AGM our then treasurer, Emma Marshall stood down and I'd like to thank Emma for her time in looking after the accounts. June Baker takes up the mantle in her place, so a warm welcome to June. With a background in banking June is well placed to handle our monetary affairs.

Our Facebook page is proving a success with over 50 members sharing photos and tips on identification. Living Record is also proving useful as a means of collating records for the VC recorders.

Thanks to John Hume you should be reading Skimmer on higher quality paper which I hope you enjoy. Good luck dragonflying in 2013 and fingers crossed for some sunshine!

Keith Gittens

### 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. Hope you've enjoyed the read. Paul Ashton.

## Minutes of the Indoor Meeting

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Yorkshire Branch of the British Dragonfly Society held on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at the Quaker Meeting Rooms, Friargate, York.**

Chair - Keith Gittens

Secretary – John Hume

Attendees – Tom Hubball, Paul Ashton, June Baker, Bill Hall, Paul Adams, Peter Hinks, Chris Abbott, Jill Lucas, Brian Smith, Richard Shillaker, Frank Adcock, Rosie Adcock.

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Steve Warrillow, Steven Gould, Ken and Pat Limb and Mike Bloomfield.
2. The minutes from the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012 were briefly read out and approved.
3. Matters arising –  
**Bank Account** – June Baker said that a new bank account had been opened with Lloyds Bank, although not without a great deal of hassle. It was also registered on the internet, so at future meetings it would be possible to show members the bank details, if internet access were possible.  
Paul Ashton wondered if it might be possible for members to pay subscriptions by standing order. June said that she would make enquires at the bank.  
**Membership** – John Hume said that he had delayed sending out subscription reminders because of the postponement of the meeting in January. However these had now been sent out and a number had been returned but there were still a lot outstanding. A further reminder would be sent with the minutes of this meeting. There had been 3 new memberships received.

#### 4. Future Events

Leeds Museum – Peter Mills had emailed John about this event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Peter had always attended this event on behalf of the Branch, but was unable to do so this year and had asked for someone else to man the event. However after a brief discussion it was felt we should give it a miss this year and that we should put our efforts into other events this summer.

Oakhill Nature Reserve – Paul Adams and Peter Hinks said that Oakhill were running a dragonfly walk on the 16<sup>th</sup> June. It was agreed that they should find out more details and that we would offer our services if required.

York Insect Festival- Keith said that this is to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> July and that he had already booked a table for the Branch. However the BDS itself would not be attending this year.

Foxglove Covert – Keith mentioned that Foxglove Covert would be holding a Bioblitz on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> July. He would be unable to attend on the 20<sup>th</sup> but would be there on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Richard Shillaker mentioned that Pondnet were trialling a scheme to encourage volunteers to collect data from a designated pond and were holding a training day on the 5<sup>th</sup> May on dragonfly and pond snail id at Skipwith or Strensall Commons. KG to lead the dragonfly id session.

Frank and Rosie Adcock mentioned that Castle Howard Arboretum held an annual Wildwood event in September and wondered if the Branch should attend this. Keith and Frank agreed to find out more details.

**5. Branch Outdoor Field Trips –**

Cropton Forest 20<sup>th</sup> July 10.00 am. Keith said that he would be leading this as a joint meeting with Ryedale Naturalists.

Rabbit Ings – John mentioned that the warden was keen for us to do a survey. Tom Hubball agreed to lead this and liaise with the warden. John to send him the contact details.

Flamborough Head- John said that Richard Baines, of Yorkshire Coast Nature, had created a number of ponds on the headland and was also keen for us to go and survey them. John agreed to contact Richard and organise a possible joint trip with the Scarborough Field Naturalists.

Foxglove Covert – Keith said that there would be a possibility of a trip to Foxglove Covert in conjunction with Cleveland Naturalists in early to mid August. He agreed to liaise with Bill Hall over arranging a suitable date.

Broomfleet Brick Ponds – Peter Hinks and Paul Adams suggested that a trip to the brick ponds would be useful especially in late May/early June to look for hairy dragonflies. Peter and Keith to liaise over arrangements for this.

- 6. 'Skimmer' –** Paul appealed for articles for this year's Skimmer magazine. Ideally these need to be with him by 16<sup>th</sup> March. John agreed to send out a general appeal via email. John mentioned that he had bought a small colour laser printer and was willing to print out Skimmer using this. He had brought along examples of the 2012 magazine, printed on different types of paper, to show members the increased quality that the laser printer produced, in comparison to an inkjet printer. He said that the cost should be no more than about 75p per copy, if plain paper was used, but this would rise to about £1.00 per copy if a coated paper was used, due to increased ink costs.

7. **BDS news** – Keith mentioned that the Chief executive, Gary Roberts, had resigned. He also gave an overview of the last BDS Members Day in Chester. Dragonfly recording network meeting to be held near Oxford, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013.
8. **AOB**- Tom Hubball asked whether anyone had heard from The VC63 recorder, Alistair Maclean. John agreed to contact him.  
Jill Lucas had brought along copies of her own book and also Corbet's 'Dragonflies. The Behaviour and Ecology of Odonata' to sell.  
Richard Shillaker mentioned the problem of invasive aquatic plants and thought that there should be an effort to record them. Keith said that we needed to be aware of the problem and that it was necessary to prevent transfer between localities. It was thought that CSL at Sand Hutton had produced a leaflet on the main species that were thought to be a problem and Keith agreed to find out further details. Richard also mentioned an unusual non-native aquatic species, Sowerby's freshwater jellyfish (*Craspedacusta sowerbii*). This had been recorded at Doncaster's Hatfield Water Park in 2002.

After the formal meeting had finished Brian Smith showed a variety of dragonfly photographs taken locally and in Corfu and Cyprus.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm

## Contacts for the Yorkshire Branch

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See page 18 for VC Recorders details

## **BDS Recorders Conference & BRC Workshop**

Biological Recording Centre, Oxfordshire, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Keith Gittens

Around 80 delegates gathered to hear a range of seminars on biological recording and atlas projects. The seminars highlighted the importance of recording and how the data could not only be used to give us a better understanding of what is happening to our flora and fauna but also to influence government policy and stimulate funding of conservation projects.

An overview was given on the work of the BRC, its involvement in various atlas projects, and what it is doing today to encourage a greater level of recording. There was a workshop on how to use their recently developed irecord on line recording system, which is open to all, and how this can be used to the benefit of specialist organisations such as the BDS.

A seminar on the recently published Butterfly Atlas of Flanders, Belgium showed how a similar system to irecord had greatly increased the collection of records. The data collected had been successfully used to identify projects and funding for conservation work on endangered species.

The first ever atlas was published in 1962 on the British Flora and a presentation on this dug in to its history and how it not only resulted in the forming of the BRC but also sparked further atlas projects. Atlases are now produced worldwide and the development of the tetrad method of recording meant that more detailed local atlases were possible.

The current dragonfly atlas is progressing and still expected to be published later this year. In total 1,057,710 records have been collected and many previously unrecorded 10km squares have been covered.

The BRC has done analysis of the dragonfly records that is showing some interesting trends. While a number of species nationally are showing an increase some of the common species of damselfly – Azure, Common Blue and Blue-tailed - show a decline. It was not clear as to why these declines are occurring, where as some of the increases were to be expected e.g. Small Red-eyed Damselfly.

Now as the records for the atlas project are all in, what happens next with regard to recording? The answer: – “Dragonfly Watch.” This new BDS project announced at the conference has the following aims: -

- Identification of key sites by proving evidence of breeding.

Identifying key sites can be critical in helping their conservation, so for these the collection of exuvia will be important.

- Complete species lists for sites.

To ensure complete lists for a site a number of visits need to be made throughout the season.

- Encourage a greater number of casual records.

Through recording schemes such as Birdtrack, Garden Bird Watch and iRecord, these records will further enhance our knowledge of dragonfly distribution.

Basically there are opportunities for all to contribute records regardless of their level of skill or effort.

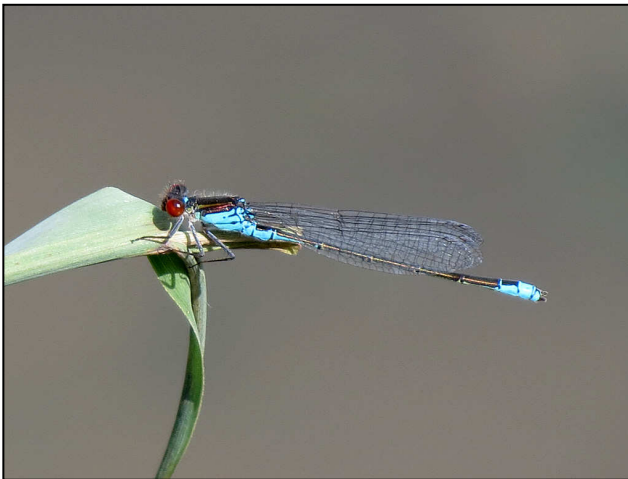
'Engaging all' was brought in to focus under the title of "Citizen Science" and shows how involving the wider public can give benefits to wildlife and conservation.

Mike Toms from the BTO told us how their projects Birdtrack and Garden Birdwatch now gives recorders the opportunity to include records for species other than birds. It is possible to enter records for dragonflies through both. This was proving successful with all records being passed on to the BDS.

A presentation on the Riverfly Partnership showed how different organisations could work together. Anglers are now being trained to do riverfly surveys, which are helping to monitor water quality and the identification of pollution incidents. This benefits the anglers and the health of the river. Some demoiselle larval records were being collected in the process.

The final presentation of the day was on migrants in 2012. The one of most interest was the movement in Europe of white-faced darter species that resulted in two individuals of *Leucorrhinia pectoralis* (Large White-faced Darter) being recorded in Britain for the first time.

In conclusion, collecting records has many benefits and we should all keep going out there and doing it. The BDS thanked all for their efforts in collecting records. We eagerly await the new atlas.



*Small Red-eyed Damselfly at Oak Road Lake – Paul Ashton*

## Field Trips and Events – 2012 Summary

### National Dragonfly Week Launch

9<sup>th</sup> June 2012

#### Rodley Nature Reserve

On a somewhat showery day the BDS National Dragonfly week got off to an excellent start at Rodley's Springwatch event. There were a good number of visitors, including families, who took part in dragonfly walks, pond dipping, moth trapping and a range of other events.

While insect activity was somewhat subdued, numerous damselflies were found in vegetation surrounding the ponds giving people the opportunity for close views. The highlight being a teneral Broad-bodied Chaser that posed nicely for photographs.

To make up for the lack of flying insects there was plenty of opportunity to get involved in making pipe cleaner dragonflies and a very large wicker one. The latter put up on display for the summer near the ponds.

Overall a thoroughly enjoyable day.... if a little damp round the edges!

### Treeton Dyke, South Yorkshire

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2012

A personal view on this field trip can be found on page 21

### YNU / YBDS Joint Meeting VC61/62

21<sup>st</sup> July 2012

#### The Howles, The Ings and The Carrs, Vale of Pickering

This joint meeting with the YNU was an opportunity to look at the water bodies on a number of farms in the Vale of Pickering that fell under the Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetlands Project. The project run by Scarborough Borough Council and headed up by Tim Burkinshaw has increased the number of pools and scrapes on the farms to attract wetland birds but has the added benefit of providing potential dragonfly habitat.

We all met at Potter Brompton Carr near Ganton, on what was for once a bright sunny morning. Having been briefed by Tim on where we could go, we discovered the area to be investigated was quite large so our group decided to focus on Potter Brompton Carr and the stretch of the Rivers Hertford and Derwent that bounded it.

The rivers had fairly steep banks so access was a little difficult but both species of Demoiselle were noted on the stretch that we surveyed. Beautiful Demoiselle gave good views and a photo opportunity near the confluence of the two rivers.

Numerous scrapes have been dug on the nearby fields, but these up until spring 2012 had been fairly dry, so on some dragonfly fauna was limited. The best produced a number of species including Broad-



bodied Chaser, Black-tailed Skimmer, Emperor and Common Darter, all typical species of pools that have a very open nature.

In total 10 species were recorded on the day and we stayed dry so overall a success! A return visit considered worthwhile, as there were areas we did not have time to study.

**Cleveland Naturalists Field Club / Yorkshire Dragonfly Group Joint Field Meeting**  
**Saturday 29th July 2012**  
**Boltby Forest**

Nine Cleveland Naturalists Field Club members, 3 Yorkshire Dragonfly Group members and 1 joint member attended this joint meeting. It had an emphasis on finding and identifying dragonflies and damselflies. The weather was fine though not particularly warm with heavy showers falling during the day, some of which were experienced by the group at the beginning of the walk.

Keith Gittens from the YDG was familiar with the area and led us first to Boltby reservoir, the level of which had been lowered and the exposed banks seeded with wild flowers by Yorkshire Water making a very attractive environment.

It turned out to be hard work to find dragonflies and only small numbers were found of Common Blue Damselfly, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly and an Emperor Dragonfly. Surprisingly no Darters were seen. Two specimens of different forms of female Common Blue Damselfly were caught and examined by the group before being released. Lunch was taken while sheltering from a heavy mid-day shower.

The group moved on after lunch to two new conservation ponds at a higher level recently created by the Forestry Commission. Not much was seen at the first but at the second the sad sight of an emerging female Migrant Hawker in the water where it had presumably been dashed by a shower. Though still alive its wings were extensively damaged making survival impossible. A second was discovered on the far side of the pond at a similar stage of development though in this case still attached to the reeds. Keith considered however that by that time of the day (mid afternoon) it should have been able to fly and was thus also vulnerable. Also seen were a Four Spot Chaser and a number of newly emerged Black Darters.

The day had been successful, though both absolute numbers and total number of dragonfly species were limited.

**Joint meeting with the Ryedale Natural History Society**  
**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2012**  
**Strensall Common, York, North Yorkshire**

A personal view on this field trip can be found on page 24

## Events and Field Trips 2013

### **Please note:**

Check the website for the latest status and updates on planned field trips.

Remember to bring a packed lunch, stout footwear and waterproof clothing.

Young persons under the age of 18 are welcome to attend all meetings. However, as the Yorkshire Branch of the BDS has no member registered under the Children's Act, their parent or guardian must accompany them. The leader of an event should also be consulted in advance if children wish to attend.

### **Broomfleet Washlands**

**Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 11.00am**

Joint Meeting with Cleveland Natural History Society

Leaders - Paul Adams/Pete Hinks

Meet - Landing Lane - SE866278, parking limited

See page 11 and 12 for photographs of the target species.

### **Rabbit Ings**

**Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 10:30am**

Leader/Contact Details - Tom Hubball 01535 678334 after 6pm or email

vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk

Meet in the car park, Lund Hill Lane, Royston.

Requirements - Bring packed lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate footwear.

### **Insect Festival**

**Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 10:00am to 4:00pm**

Yorkshire Museum Gardens and Hospitium, York

BDS Yorkshire Branch will be represented.

### **National Dragonfly Week**

**Saturday 20 July to Sunday 28 July**

### **Tranmire Bog & Cropton Pools**

**Saturday, 20th July, 10.00am**

Joint Meeting with Ryedale Natural History Society

Leader - Keith Gittens

Meet Wheeldale Bridge - SE802970

### **Foxglove Covert LNR, Catterick Garrison**

**Saturday, 17th August, 10.30am**

Leader: Bill Hall tel. 01642 823170 or 07753663589

Grid Reference: SE162972

Joint meeting with the Cleveland Naturalists.

Requirements - Bring packed lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate footwear. Entry is through Cambrai Barracks; drivers will need photo ID such as their driving license



*Male Hairy Dragonfly – Broomfleet Washlands – Paul Ashton*



*Female Hairy Dragonfly – Broomfleet Washlands – Paul Ashton*



*Male Variable Damselfly – Broomfleet Washlands – Paul Ashton*



*Female Variable Damselfly – Broomfleet Washlands – Paul Ashton*



## VC61 South-east Yorkshire Report

Paul Ashton

2012 will go down as one of those years best forgotten, due to the appalling weather experienced through the summer months. At first it seemed a difficult task to write something interesting about the year, though most species were recorded in good numbers when the weather was kind, there were also a few losers, and surprisingly, also a few winners.

Emerald Damselfly is a species that can survive ponds drying out during the summer, laying eggs in plant stems above the water, for them to hatch when the water rises in spring the following year. Due to the rising water levels, some sites had exceptional numbers as the larvae rapidly develop before emerging the same year as adults. Small Red-eyed Damselfly saw earlier emergence dates, with several records received in the latter half of July. Since its arrival in the county, it has predominantly been an August only species. The next winner was Hairy Dragonfly, with a record count of 194 from the 3 mile stretch of Leven Canal on 29<sup>th</sup> May. This is in contrast to zero on the planned Field Meeting held here on 20<sup>th</sup> May when the weather put off even the hardiest of souls. This species also continues to spread along the North bank of the Humber, with Saltmarshe Delph adding it to its species list.

The following species all suffered, with fewer records received for Common Hawker and Southern Hawker, the only double figure count for the latter coming from Saltmarshe Delph. Broad-bodied Chaser was the biggest casualty, with only four sites returning records.

It's no surprise that it was a poor year for migrants, there being only one record of a single Red-veined Darter at Spurn on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

Despite the weather it was nice to receive some records from the less well watched areas of the vice-county. Most of these coming from observers who have signed up to the Living Record Website, these being most welcome in the final year of National Atlas recording.

<http://www.livingrecord.net>

### **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! Latest editions available for download, please contact John Hume for password.

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

## VC62 & 65 North-west and North-east Yorkshire Report

Keith Gittens

In 2012 early season records were down as the poor weather took its toll. One Four-spotted Chaser that did emerge was noted to be on the same stem two days after it was first seen. Whether it ever made its maiden flight or was predated we will never know, but it begs the question how many more will have suffered a similar fate.

Later species seemed to have their emergence pushed back and when the weather did improve in late summer there were some decent adult counts.

A visit to a previously unrecorded site, Thorpe Perrow Arboretum near Bedale in early September, proved a great success with 10 species recorded and egg laying noted by four Aeshna species. Southern Hawker could best be described as abundant and it was nice to see a healthy population of Ruddy Darters. This is a good addition to sites for VC65, which is under-recorded due to a shortage of both recorders and water bodies in the northern Dales.

There continues to be a lack of Ruddy and Common Darters at some sites that previously held good numbers. However, at some recently established ponds in Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve, Common Darters have been seen in profusion, Common Hawker also being noted here in good numbers.

One possible loss for VC62 that had only recently become an addition to the vice-county is Small Red-eyed Damselfly. With no records this year and no breeding activity recorded for two years the species has probably died out at its one site near Scarborough.

Despite the weather a number of other new sites were recorded in 2012.

Thank you to those who did manage to find some sunny weather and send in records.



*Thorpe Perrow Arboretum*

## Dragonflies and Wildlife in the Dordogne (23-29<sup>th</sup> June 2012)

Richard Shillaker

I have been receiving the brochure of wildlife holidays with the Travelling Naturalist for several years but always considered them too pricey for my pocket. However this year with partial retirement only a few months off I was tempted to treat myself, especially when I saw that Dick Askew, author of *Dragonflies of Europe*, was one of the two leaders of a dragonfly holiday in France. I finally pushed the go button after getting positive encouragement from Keith Gittens who had explored the area and knew the other leader, David Simpson.

Another decision I had been toying with just prior to the holiday was whether to buy a pair of Pentax Papilio close focusing binoculars to complement my high quality standard 8 x 32 binoculars. Faced with choice of 6.5 x 21 or 8.5 x 21, I decided on 8.5x because I wanted maximum magnification. At first I thought I had made a poor choice because the image seemed slightly shaky (I expect the image would have been more stable with 6.5x) and caused me some eye strain. However I soon adjusted to the Papilios and they turned out to be very useful; several others on the trip also had Papilios.



*Top left: Orange-spotted Emerald*

*Top right: Southern Skimmer*

*Bottom left: Blue-eyed Hooktail*

*Bottom right: Blue-eyed Hooktail*



*Left: Downy Emerald*  
*Right: Scarlet Darter*

The holiday, which based at a small hotel in the quiet village of Mauzac right by the river, was most enjoyable, informative and provided plenty of photo opportunities even for me armed with a compact digital camera. There were just seven of us and the two leaders (great 'teacher-to-pupil' ratio); this made for a low impact group which was easy to organise and fitted nicely into a comfortable minibus. Evening meals outside on the hotel patio were special, being both adventurous and extremely tasty, but food took second place when a Booted Eagle flew overhead.

Although the prime focus of the holiday was dragonflies, there was plenty of attention paid to other wildlife. The leaders, and other members of the holiday, provided expertise in dragonflies, orthoptera, butterflies, birds and flowers, with Dick Askew the ever-present entomological encyclopedia (one interesting fact I learnt was that a Mayfly goes through one moult as a winged adult). You knew you were in the company of experts when there was confident identification of bird calls and spotting a new dragonfly was followed by a shout of its scientific species name.

We visited a number of different types of watery location including ponds, lakes, rivers, streams and damp meadows (one large village pond with plenty of fringing emergent vegetation and a shallow flooded muddy area had previously been identified as good sites by Keith Gittens). We started and ended our trip, however, with an insect-rich south-facing limestone slope on a hill overlooking the Dordogne. This site yielded only a Brilliant Emerald and two species of Featherlegs but there was plenty of other natural history interest (oh yes, and we gave a naked camper quite a surprise). Notable sightings included Adonis Blue, Great Banded Grayling and Berger Clouded Yellow butterflies, a very attractive Burnet moth, as well as Great Green and Speckled Bush Crickets. The



photographers were in paradise, especially on the cooler second visit when insects were less active on the herb-rich grass and scrub.

Of the 51 species of dragonflies and damselflies known from this part of the Dordogne, 40 species were seen during the holiday, including a Violet Dropwing which was a new record for the area. I didn't see all 40 but I did manage a digiscope photo of the male Violet Dropwing which repeatedly returned to perch on a fallen branch not far from the banks of a sheltered bay of a large lake. This striking red and violet coloured insect is apparently a common species in tropical Africa which is spreading its range northwards into Europe. Several Scarlet Darters added to the colour show on this very hot day at an abandoned pleasure lake. Earlier the same morning Dick Askew had managed to net an Orange-spotted Emerald, a species now extinct in Britain. Dick's skilled use of a hand net also allowed close examination of several other active flyers including Blue-eyed Hooktail and Downy Emerald.

In addition to the more exotic species, there were several British species that I had not seen before such as White-legged Damselfly, Small Red Damselfly and Small Red-eyed Damselfly. The Small Red-eyed Damsels were seen only on one pond, where they perched on a dense floating matt of an unidentified swirling hair-like water weed. The larger Red-eyed damselflies appeared to be absent from this pond but were present on a pond only about 50 metres away which lacked the strange swirling floating weed. Having an interest in the Variable Damselfly (we didn't see any) and knowing the difficulties in being sure of the correct identification of small blue damselflies, I paid particular attention at several locations to the small blues that were new to me, i.e. Goblet-marked, Dainty and Southern (the Papilios were very useful here).

One site I particularly liked was a small shallow pool with an inlet stream and a wide muddy surround. Although not visually attractive it looked potentially very interesting and several of us were quickly onto the mud and scanning with binoculars. We were not disappointed as it held three species of Skimmer, i.e. Black-tailed, Keeled and White-tailed. Patient stalking led to some fine photographs.



*Left: Violet Dropwing (digiscope)*



*Right: Hair-like weed on which Small Red-eyed Damselflies were seen*

In addition to the 40 species of dragonflies, the group as a whole totted up sightings of 81 species of birds (a cheer went up when eventually a Robin was added to the list) and 52 species of butterflies. Particularly memorable bird and butterfly sightings for me included clear views of a Crested Tit and a Melodious Warbler and close views of a Lesser Purple Emperor butterfly attracted by some dung on the ground. Other interesting insects included Violet Carpenter Bee, Bee Fly (with long rigid proboscis protruding in flight) and Field Cricket. I missed the Viperine Snake swimming in a stream but couldn't miss the incessant croaking of Green Frogs in the river near the hotel nor the burrows and broken egg shells of the European Pond Terrapin at a protected site. I stood watching a Coypu grooming itself and twice saw a dense shoal of what looked like large tadpoles but in fact were young Catfish that twisted and turned in unison like a cloud of Starlings.

A detailed 15-page trip report written by the leaders, which includes species lists and many photographs, is available on the Travelling Naturalist website, see <http://www.naturalist.co.uk/reports2012/Dragonflies12.pdf>

The holiday is on again this year, see [http://www.naturalist.co.uk/tours/dordogne\\_dragonflies.php](http://www.naturalist.co.uk/tours/dordogne_dragonflies.php)

For more information about dragonflies and wildlife in the Dordogne, see the articles written by David Simpson in British Wildlife (December 2009) and Dragonfly News (Autumn 2011).

### Vice-county recorders

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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.

## An Update on PondNet 2013

Penny Williams (Pond Conservation, Oxford)

PondNet is just about to start the second of its 2 year trials to see if it's possible to establish a new monitoring network for ponds.

The project, supported by Natural England and Defra, aims to work with volunteers to collect species and habitat quality data that will ultimately provide statistically robust information to help guide the direction of freshwater policy.

The project's trial year in 2012 aimed to road test it's protocols and methodologies. In total volunteers collected plant, animal and environmental data from 135 ponds in 67 1 km squares in the three trial regions: NE Yorkshire, Cheshire and S Hampshire.

As a result of feedback, many elements of the project have been changed for 2013:

- Participants said they wanted sites closer to home to reduce travel time. So in 2013 the project's 1km survey squares are being allocated within 10 miles of a volunteer's home postcode. In Yorkshire the survey area has been extended south to the Humber to make this possible.
- Volunteers wanted more training, so additional courses have been added in 2013, including some half-day meetings to see uncommon species.
- PondNet's data entry forms have been changed so that it's now possible to record casual records as well as systematic survey data.
- To help both experienced and inexperienced volunteers it's now possible to now record your level of confidence that you've got the right species.
- As a result of 2012 trials, the survey methods for BAP species have been changed to ensure the most effective methods are used.

If you'd like to join-in with PondNet in 2013, and help make the trials a success, you can choose to record just dragonflies or a number of groups including: invertebrates, plants, amphibians, birds, BAP species or environmental factors. The dragonfly methodology uses BDS's Monitoring Scheme forms, so contributes to the BDS's database. Local naturalist Martin Hammond has identified ponds in Yorkshire that potentially meet EU Habitats Directive criteria as biologically important habitats. It is hoped that PondNet volunteers can provide more supporting evidence for these small water bodies whose species richness is often not taken into account sufficiently by regulatory authorities.

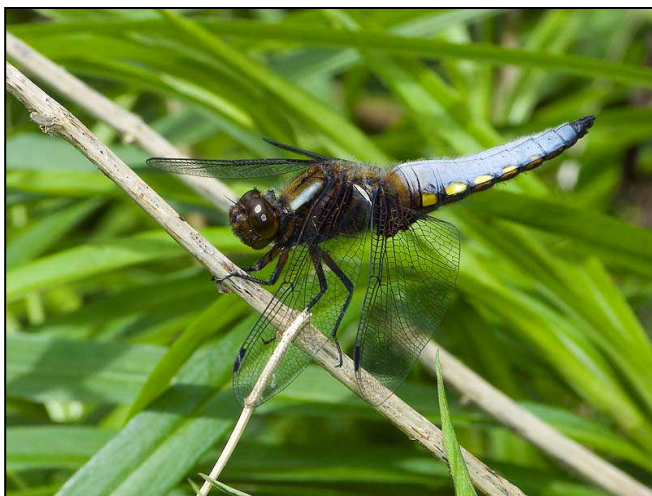
PondNet's data are stored in a 'warehouse' hosted by the Biological Records Centre, the data are freely available for anyone to look at, and are also fed through to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).

For more information, to sign up for a survey square, or get details of training courses in Yorkshire (available March-May) please email Penny Williams [pwilliams@pondconservation.org.uk](mailto:pwilliams@pondconservation.org.uk), 01865 483278

[Note: Richard Shillaker is a PondNet volunteer. Last year he provided some dragonfly records for a pond on a farm near York. This year he is intending to survey some more interesting ponds near the Humber.]



*Pond Conservation team visiting a newly created pond*



*Male Broad-bodied Chaser, a species spreading northwards in the UK (photo by Dan Eccles)*

## It's not all Dragonflies

Paul Ashton

As the title suggest, our field trips are not all about dragonflies. Most of the sites we visit host many other types of flora and fauna, some scarce in their own right, due to the differing types of habitat we encounter. To give you a flavour of what can be expected; the following are extracts from my Blog from two field trips held in 2012.

### Treeton Dyke – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Saturday 14th July was the date in the diary for one of this year's Yorkshire Branch of the British Dragonfly Societies field trips. Treeton Dyke was chosen as a venue following a previous field trip to this site, along with the outside chance of seeing Lesser Emperor Dragonfly *Anax parthenope* a rare potential breeder here. This species was first recorded in Britain as recently as 1996 and has become a more frequent visitor to this country. In 2006 there were a number of records from several Yorkshire sites, with breeding activity noted. Again in 2009 there were several Yorkshire records, surprisingly from the same sites that held this species in 2006. Was there a chance that this species was breeding, and being at the northern edge of its range, taking three years to emerge? The only way to find out was to organise a field trip to one of these few sites in 2012, with the hope of an outside chance of connecting with this species. Unfortunately the weather this year has severely knocked back the larger species, so it was always a rather long chance that we would connect with one. There is still a chance that some could appear, as several of the larger species are emerging later this year, so there is still time over the coming weeks to see if this species is present.

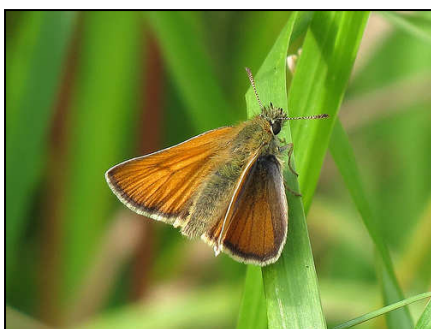
All in all, nine species of odonata were observed during the day, and in the current climate this can certainly be deemed as a good day. Good numbers of Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* were obvious, with several teneral recently emerged. Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* were easily found, along with a few Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*. Only one Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* was observed. Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* and Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* recently emerged were flushed from the tall grasses, quickly settling to allow close observation and the opportunity to see the differences between these two similar species.

The walk back along the eastern edge gave better opportunities to see Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*. As the day warmed up a couple of Brown Hawkers *Aeshna grandis* began hunting in one of the clearings. As the trip came to a close two Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* were observed, along the main track to the water ski centre.

Female Emerald Damselfly  
*Lestes sponsa*







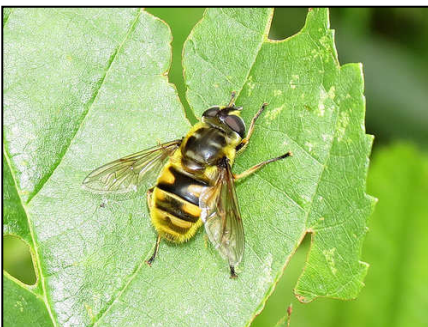
Top left: Male Azure Damselfly – *Coenagrion puella*,  
Top right: Male Common Blue Damselfly – *Enallagma cyathigerum*  
Centre left: Male Blue-tailed Damselfly – *Ischnura elegans*  
Centre right: Female Ruddy Darter – *Sympetrum sanguineum*  
Bottom left: Small Skipper – *Thymelicus sylvestris*  
Bottom Right: Large White – *Pieris brassicae*

The steady pace of the walk around the dyke gave opportunities to see other invertebrates, butterflies being well represented with seven species on the wing, again a good number considering how they are struggling with the weather this year. Those present included Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*, Large White *Pieris brassicae*, Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*, Comma *Polygonia c-album*, Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*, Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* and Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*. Several individuals of the day flying moth, Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet *Zygaena lonicerae* was also observed. One of the moths in the photo has managed to secure a passenger, or is about to become lunch for a lucky spider.



Left: Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet - *Zygaena lonicerae*  
Right: *Sphaerophoria scripta*

As well as the butterflies and moths I managed to photograph a few Hoverfly species, the identifications open to comment as this can be a tricky group to identify.



Left: *Myathropa florum*  
Right: *Eupiodes luniger*

## Stensall Common – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2012

Today saw me visit a new site, as part of the organised joint field trip to Stensall Common, by the [Yorkshire Branch of the British Dragonfly Society](#) and [Ryedale Natural History Society](#). The main focus of this trip was dragonflies, though there was plenty of other interest for the seventeen people who attended.



The most abundant species was Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*, with many paired up and ovipositing into the *Juncus* stems, one small pool holding little vegetation having several pairs on single stems. The most productive pond was in a woodland clearing and it was here that we encountered all the species. "Blue" damselflies were found in small numbers with Common Blue Damselflies *Enallagma cyathigerum* being the most numerous here, followed by Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* and Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*. It was at this pond that the larger species put in an appearance, as the sun finally came through. A single male Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator* was patrolling the pond and was finally joined by an ovipositing female, the male making several attempts to pair up, without success. A female Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* was flying around the perimeter, trying to find a suitable place to oviposit. A male Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea* also joined the scene looking out for females in the emergent vegetation around the edges. Whilst observing the hawkers, an unexpected species made a brief appearance, in the form of a female Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*, which had wandered away from its more usual habitat. Four-spotted Chasers *Libellula quadrimaculata* were still in evidence with several seen, though these are now rapidly nearing the end of their season. Finally three species of "darter" were observed, Black Darter *Sympetrum danae* being the most numerous with many pairs "in-cop", with lesser numbers of Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* and Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* also displaying breeding behavior, with pairs ovipositing in tandem.





Top left: Emerald Damselfly – *Lestes sponsa*

Top right: Emerald Damselfly – *Lestes sponsa*

Centre left: Common Blue Damselfly – *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Centre right: Black Darter – *Sympetrum danae*

Bottom left: Common Darter – *Sympetrum striolatum*

Bottom right: Four-spotted Chaser – *Libellula quadrimaculata*

Many were also interested in the butterflies, though none were present in large numbers, eleven species were recorded. These included Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*, Large Skipper *Ochlodes venatus*, Large White *Pieris brassicae*, Green-veined White *Pieris napi*, Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*, Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*, Peacock *Inachis io*, Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*, Gatekeeper *Pyrionia tithonus*, Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* and Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*. In addition a scarce moth was on the target list, Dark Bordered Beauty *Epione vespertaria*, found at only four sites in the UK, two in Scotland and two in England. I understand that early morning are best for this species, however we did manage to see a single specimen of this attractive moth.



Top left: Holly Blue – *Celastrina argiolus*

Top right: Small Skipper – *Thymelicus sylvestris*

Bottom left: Small Copper – *Lycaena phlaeas*

Bottom right: Bog Bush Cricket – *Metrioptera brachyptera*

The supporting cast was provided by several other species groups. Hoverfly *Helophilus pendulus* was very abundant at this site, with thousands present, and Bog Hoverfly *Sericomylia silentis*, one of our largest hoverflies was also easily observed here. Bog Bush-crickets *Metrioptera brachyptera* were present in good numbers, though difficult to photograph, as they rapidly disappeared into the vegetation. Within the same month I find myself writing about Adders *Vipera berus* for the third time, at least four individuals seen by various members of the group. In addition several Common Lizards *Lacerta vivipara* were also seen, though most only briefly as they scuttled for cover.



*Left: Bog Hoverfly – Sericomyia silentis*



*Right: Hoverfly – Helophilus pendulus*

[www.eastyorkshirewildlife.wordpress.com](http://www.eastyorkshirewildlife.wordpress.com)

## Yorkshire Branch on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr

Paul Ashton

The Yorkshire Branch can be found on Facebook, enabling everyone to discuss all things dragonfly related, post their pictures and share with others. Anybody can view the page, though if you want to post, or add pictures, you will need to request to become a member of the Facebook Group.

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/yorkshiredragonflies/>

We are also on Twitter and can be followed @BDSYorkshire

All updates to the website will be notified through Facebook and Twitter. This makes it an ideal way to keep right up to date, via mobile devices, without having to constantly check the website.

All updates to the website are also available through RSS news readers. To subscribe to these updates via one of many readers available, please use the following link:-

<http://www.erdragonflies.co.uk/yorkshire/blog/wordpress/?feed%3Drss2>

We also have a Yorkshire Branch presence on Flickr, the photo sharing site. Use the following link to browse some excellent photographs.

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/yorkshiredragonflies/>



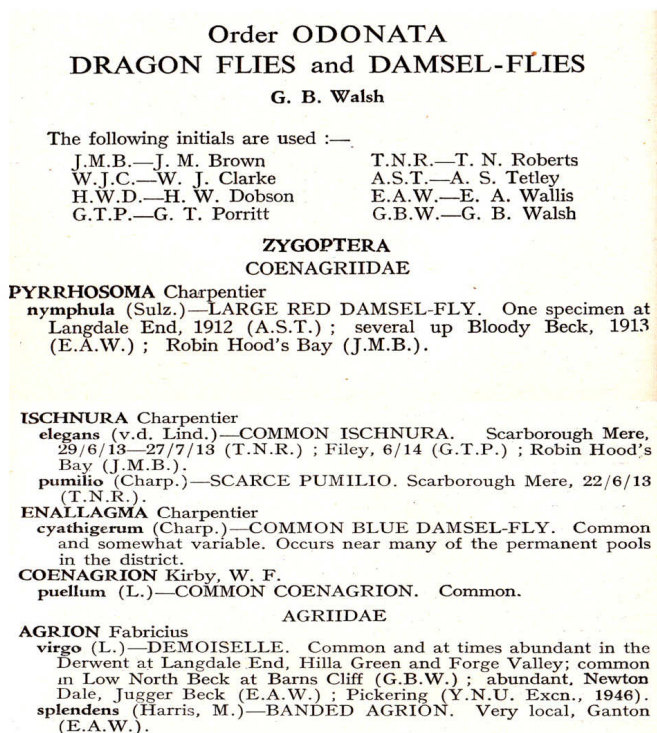
## The Odonata of the Scarborough District

John Hume

The Scarborough Field Naturalists Society was founded in 1889 by six like-minded men all with a similar interest in recording and observing natural history. At its peak the Society had nearly 200 members; sadly this has now diminished to around 30. First and foremost, the aims of Society members were to record the fauna, flora and geology of Scarborough and its surrounding area. This area came to be defined formally as covering the coast from just north of Robin Hoods Bay to Bridlington, inland to Malton, northwards to Glaisdale and then back to Robin Hoods Bay. This is quite a substantial area.

In the early 1950's it was decided to collate the then total number of records and publish the findings. Thus two volumes of 'The Natural History of the Scarborough District' were subsequently published. The first covered Botany and Geology and the second Zoology. Throughout the 120 years of the Society certain areas have always had good and continuous records and knowledgeable recorders, whilst others have few records and only tantalizing glimpses of what there must have been around to be observed. Unfortunately Odonata falls in this latter category.

Below is a facsimile copy of the records collated in the 1956 volume:



ANISOPTERA  
CORDULEGASTRIDAE

**CORDULEGASTER** Leach  
**boltonii** (Don.)—GOLDEN-RINGED DRAGON-FLY. Fairly common along the banks of moorland streams. Occasionally it comes down to the lowlands, and on 12/10/49 (a very hot year), a pair were seen flying round Mr. H. W. Dobson's ornamental fish-pond in Stepney Drive, Scarborough.

AESHNIDAE

**AESHNA** Fabricius  
**junceae** (L.)—COMMON AESHNA. Somewhat local; Ravenscar (G.B.W.); Robin Hood's Bay (J.M.B.); Langdale, Bloody Beck (E.A.W.).  
**cyanea** (Muell., O. F.)—SOUTHERN AESHNA. Scarborough (G.T.P., in Vict. County Hist.); Throxenby Mere (G.B.W.).

LIBELLULIDAE

**LIBELLULA** Linnaeus  
**quadrifasciata** L.—FOUR-SPOTTED LIBELLULA. Stepney, 18/4/13 (T.N.R.); Forge Valley (G.B.W.).  
**depressa** L.—BROAD-BODIED LIBELLULA. Scarborough (G.T.P.); two m. and one f. at Langdale End, 2/6/47 (E.A.W.); Forge Valley (G.B.W.).  
**SYMPETRUM** Newman  
**striolatum** (Charp.)—COMMON SYMPETRUM. Occasional; Throxenby Mere, 11/10/35 (G.B.W.); Scarborough, 12/10/49 (H.W.D.); Robin Hood's Bay (J.M.B.).

**LEUCORRHINIA** Brittinger  
**dubia** (v.d. Lind.)—WHITE-FACED DRAGON-FLY. In June, 1900, many thousands of this rare dragon-fly were seen coming in from the sea at Scarborough; they were seen from the South Cliff to as far north as Cloughton (W.J.C.). They were identified by an expert of the "Field." Miss Cynthia Longfield does not record it as a migrant in her "Dragonflies of the British Isles," 1937.

For 60 years of records this is not many!!

However there are a couple of interesting observations.

1. The record of *Ischnura pumilio* (scarce blue-tailed damselfly) at Scarborough Mere on 22 June 1913. On the British Dragonfly society's web pages it is classified as nationally scarce in the British Red Data Book of Insects. At the turn of the century it was thought to be extinct, but in recent times has shown some range expansion.  
In Britain it is most numerous in southwest counties of England and Wales, but there are additional sites scattered across Britain and Ireland. Isolated colonies exist in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire.  
The recorder T.N.Roberts also recorded *Ischnura elegans* (blue-tailed damselfly) at the same site a month later. Was it possible that he mistook the former for the later? It would be interesting to know what the distribution Of *I. pumilio* was at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
2. The record of a mass migration of *Leucorrhinia dubia* (white faced dragonfly) over the Scarborough coast in June 1900. The BDS web site says 'The White Faced Darter is a species of lowland peatbogs. It requires relatively deep, oligotrophic, acidic bog pools with considerable rafts of Sphagnum at the edges in which to breed. Larvae also occur among waterlogged Sphagnum in depressions devoid of standing water. The larvae live within the matrix of submerged and floating sphagnum and are confined to waters without fish. Away from its aquatic habitat it also requires scrub or woodland, which provides important

roosting and feeding sites'. It would seem, therefore, to be unlikely that it was this species that was observed. Keith Gittens has suggested that it might have been *L.pectoralis* which is known to be migratory. Even so it makes for a fascinating record and it would be interesting to know if there are any European records of this migration and if so which species it was.

Since then there has been little, if any, recording of Odonata until I started in the late 1900's. However there have been a few additions to the area's species list namely *Aeshna Mixta* (migrant hawkler), *Aeshna grandis* (brown hawkler), *Anax imperator* (emperor), *Orthetrum cancellatum* (black-tailed skimmer), *Orthetrum coerulescens* (keeled skimmer), *Sympetrum sanguineum* (ruddy darter), *S. danae* (black darter), *S. fonscolombii* (Red-veined darter) and more recently *Erythromma viridulum* (small red-eyed damselfly).

The total overall species count since the society's foundation in 1889 stands at 24, with a present observable count of 20-22 in a good year, depending on whether the small red-eyed damselfly is still present at the Seamer Tip ponds where it was original discovered 4 years ago by John Harwood. If you are in the SFNS recording area, and do record any dragonflies, then please send the records to me at [info@scarboroughfieldnats.co.uk](mailto:info@scarboroughfieldnats.co.uk), as well as sending them to the appropriate VC recorder. Please note that the SFNS area covers parts of VC61 and VC62.

### Scarborough Field Naturalists Society Odonata Species List

<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	Common Hawker
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Banded Demoiselle	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Migrant Hawker
<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Emerald Damselfly	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Southern Hawker
<i>Pyrhosoma nymphula</i>	Large red Damselfly	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	Brown Hawker
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Azure Damselfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	Emperor Dragonfly
<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Small red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Golden-ringed Dragonfly
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Chaser
<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>	Scarce blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Broad-bodied Chaser
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Black-tailed Skimmer
		<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	Keeled Skimmer
		<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Common Darter
		<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	Ruddy Darter
		<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	Black Darter
		<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Red-veined Darter
		<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i>	White-faced Darter

## 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 Ex-resident
<i>Pyrhosoma 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

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Front Cover Photo: Golden Ringed Dragonfly at Timble Ings – Geoff Hall  
Below: Common Hawker at Broomfleet Washlands – Barry Warrington

