

Skimmer

Yorkshire Branch Magazine 2012



www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk

Notes from the Chair

So here we are, not sure how it happened, but Tom Hubball has finally found someone to pick up the mantle of chairman and it's me! Not only must I thank Tom for all his hard work over the last 6 years, but also Paul Ashton who has stepped down as secretary. Paul retains responsibility for the website, but is replaced as secretary by John Hume. Welcome aboard John!

I think it is also worth pointing out at this time there are changes to the vice-county recorders, which have had a shuffle round with Helen Dinsdale stepping down. Thank you Helen, for your work with VC64. Welcome to Alistair McLean who is taking up the role for VC63.

Looking back over the last year, it is a shame that 2011 turned out to be a poor summer, particularly after such a promising start. Records for emergence of species were well up in April/early May, but alas it was not to continue. Both the opportunities to record and the number of insects on the wing were limited. As a result, the number of records for 2011 were lower than we would have liked, in the penultimate year of recording for the new national atlas.

On a positive note for 2011 the opportunity to use the new web based software "Living Record" has meant anyone registered with a VC recorder, now has an easy way of entering records. These can then be collected and verified on-line by the relevant VCR. This software is accessible through the Yorkshire Dragonflies website and anyone interested should contact one of the recorders.

Looking forward to 2012 and keeping on a web based theme, we now have a Facebook user group which anyone can register to join. This gives a forum for discussion of sightings or difficulties with identification and the chance to post a picture. We hope this will make it easier for anyone unsure of their dragonfly id to improve their skills and send in a few more records!!

The highlight for 2012 is no doubt the launch of the BDS national dragonfly week at Rodley Nature Reserve, Leeds on the 9th June. This is a huge opportunity to raise the profile of dragonfly conservation in Yorkshire and I hope as many of you as possible will come along to the day's events.

Well I think that's enough from me, enjoy your copy of Skimmer. We look forward to seeing you at one of the organised events and good luck dragonfly hunting in 2012!

Keith Gittens

Changes to the Committee

Tom Hubball

As most of you will probably know by now, my reign as Branch Chairman has come to an end. I can honestly say that I've thoroughly enjoyed my time leading the Branch for the past six years and I'm particularly delighted in the increase of membership numbers. Long may that rise continue. As it currently stands, the membership is hovering around the 80 mark, but out of that there are only 15-20 'active' members. I was delighted that Keith Gittens agreed to become the new Branch Chairman, which will allow me to pursue other interests, although I'll still be there leading an event, or manning the Branch display if needed. I sincerely hope that others will follow his lead and become more proactive within the Branch.

Following Paul Ashton's decision to step down from his role as Branch Secretary, although he will still oversee the website and production of Skimmer, John Hume has taken up the mantle. Although John is a relative newcomer to the Branch, he brings with him a wealth of experience from his various professional and leisure pursuits, including Secretary and current Odonata Recorder of Scarborough Field Naturalists' Society.

I wish them both well in their new roles and I'm glad to leave the Branch with such talented and enthusiastic naturalists at the helm.

Contacts for the Yorkshire Branch

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See page 12 for VC Recorders details

Minutes of the Indoor Meeting

Attendees: Keith Gittens (Chair), Tom Hubball (Minutes Secretary - seconded), Bill Hall, Paul Aston, Michael Bloomfield, Pat Limb, Ken Limb, John Sykes, John Bowers, Jill Lucas and Richard Shillaker.

1. Apologies for absence

KG welcomed the above attendees and received apologies from the following: John Hume, Steve Warrillow, Emma Marshall, Peter Mill, Lee & Jax Westmoreland, Paul & Helen Dinsdale, Chris Abbott.

2. Minutes from last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were read and approved.

3. Matters arising

KG confirmed that National Dragonfly Week will be from 9th to 17th June with the launch taking place at Rodley Nature Reserve on Saturday 9th June. Rodley NR will also be holding their Spring Fair on this date with various activities planned throughout the day. KG asked for volunteers and several attendees expressed an interest in attending.

JB stated that the York BioBlitz is being held on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th June, in conjunction with various Yorkshire based natural history societies and OPAL, at York Museum and Gardens. JB said that the Scarborough BioBlitz held in 2011 was a great success and hoped that this one would also prove as successful.

JB also confirmed that he will be running a Dragonfly Identification Workshop at Rodley N.R. on 7th July. Please refer to Yorkshire Naturalists' Union for details. KG said that the village of Wass was holding an Environment Weekend on 28th-29th April and he hoped to attend.

KG also stated that he is running a Dragonfly Identification Workshop at Askham Bog on 22nd July, which will include both an indoor, at the nearby YWT offices, and outdoor session on the Reserve itself.

KG will also be running another workshop for the volunteers at Foxglove Covert N.R, Catterick Garrison followed by a public walk on 5th August.

KG advised that he will also be organising a joint field trip with Yorkshire Branch of the BDS and Ryedale Naturalists to Strensall Common on 11th August. JB and PA raised a comment at this point about the state of Skipwith Common, stating that the habitat had seriously deteriorated in respect of the dragonfly fauna since a large drainage ditch was dug to alleviate flooding on another part of the site.

This, coupled with two relative dry summers for the East Riding in particular, has caused many of the peaty pools to dry out.

BH stated that the proposed field trip to Boltby is still being arranged.

TH said that a return visit to Treeton Dyke has been organised for Saturday 14th July with the hope that it may coincide with the emergence of Lesser Emperor, provided it follows its apparent three year cycle at the site, following sightings in 2006 and 2009.

PA will be arranging an ad hoc field trip to Leven Canal, but was unsure of the exact date, so watch the Branch website for details on this one.

KG relayed a message from John Hume, that a field trip to the River Hertford where both Banded and Beautiful Demoiselle are present will be on the weekend of 7th or 8th July, the exact date being undecided at the time of the meeting. KG stated that this would probably be a joint walk with volunteers of the Cayton & Flixton Wetland Project.

RS noted that he would again be attending the Drifffield Show on Wednesday 18th July and hoped that others may be able to promote the Branch's activities on the day, distributing leaflets, etc. PA stated that he may be able to attend.

4. Progress of 'Skimmer'

PA stated that articles were still required, so if anyone had anything to get the final draft to him by end of February. If members have any trip reports, interesting sightings or anything else dragonfly related which they think may appeal to other Branch members, then please do not hesitate to send them to Paul Ashton, or any other member of the committee.

5. Website

PA confirmed that as usual at this time of year, fewer people were visiting the website. PA had also investigated possible sources of attracting more sightings to be submitted and provided a brief outline of setting up a Facebook account for the Branch. Following a brief discussion around the table it was agreed that this was a good idea and PA was given the go ahead to prepare a Facebook page for the Branch. JB remarked that Flickr was a good resource for uploading photos and it may be possible for the Branch to utilise this.

6. Records 2011

KG asked if anyone had any records which have not been submitted to their respective Vice-county Recorders. TH added that records needed to be submitted as soon as possible. KG, KL and JB stated that Ruddy Darter had appeared to have had a bad year with few records from known sites. Presumably this was due to the past couple of bad winters. However KG also noted that it had been an early start to the year in the east of the county, with good numbers recorded but MB and TH remarked that over in the west it was a terrible year, especially at good upland sites like Timble lngs.

2012

KG and PA reminded everyone that this is the final year of the BDS atlas, so as many unrecorded sites should be visited as possible. TH added that VC65 is still under-recorded due to the underlying limestone preventing formation of any significant water-bodies, although the streams throughout the area may hold populations of Golden-ringed at least. However, altitude may be playing a part in preventing colonisation from other areas. TH also commented that although he had contacted other natural history societies in the area, very few dragonfly records had been forthcoming.

Recording Software

KG presented a brief outline of Living Record, a web based program utilising Google Maps, which had been shown to the vice-county recorders at the DRN meeting and asked whether the other vice-county recorders were getting many records from it. PA and TH confirmed that it was a useful tool and was especially helpful as people could see an aerial map of the sites where people had submitted records. KG also commented that the one slight downside is that records have to be input individually. KG and PA said that it is currently set up as invitation only and if anyone wanted to use this site, then they needed to contact their respective vice-county recorder to set them up with a password to access it.

7. News

KG confirmed that no updates had been received from BDS apart from requesting articles from the vice-county recorders for Dragonfly News and Darter, the DRN newsletter.

8. AOB

RS suggested that a good way to publicise the Branch and dragonflies in general could be achieved by getting articles published in the weekly Country Week section of Yorkshire Post.

TH said that he had contacted the Features Editor to confirm whether a series of articles relating to the launch of National Dragonfly Week could be published. To date, TH had not received a reply.

KG said that twelve individuals and four joint/family memberships had been renewed so far and that the Branch had received £24 in donations. Three members had informed him that they were not renewing their membership, two of these because they had left the area.

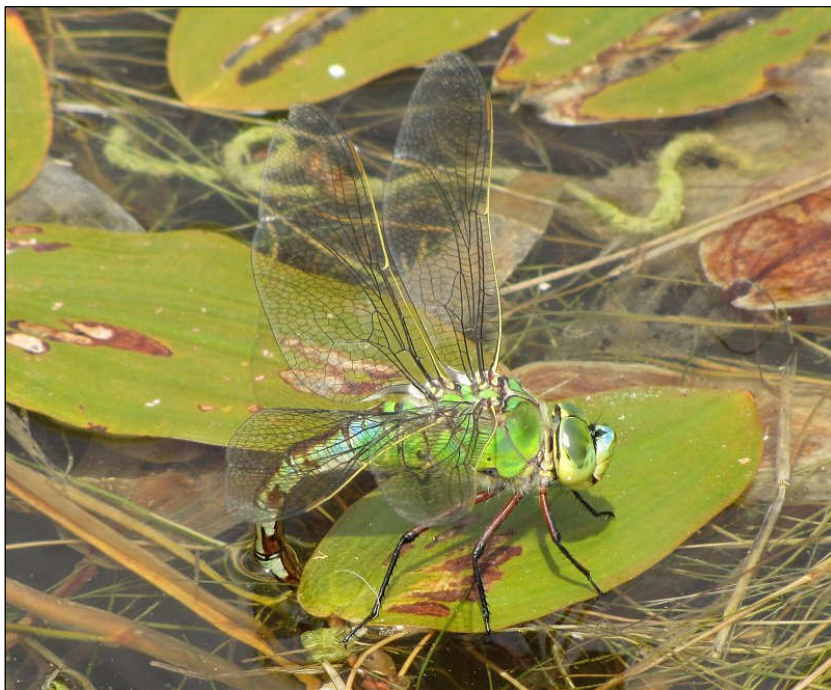
JB asked whether anyone wanted a free copy of his book on Dragonflies of Lesbos. Further free copies may be made available at Rodley N.R.

MB asked if anyone was aware of BDS postcards being produced. No-one at the meeting was aware of any available on the BDS website.

RS publicised a Fly Identification Course to be held at Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's Wisbey Education Centre on 18th-19th February.

JL asked when and where the BDS AGM was to be held this year. Attendees thought that it was going to be held in Chester, but no confirmation had been received from the BDS yet. Details would undoubtedly be available in the next edition of Dragonfly News.

The formal part of the meeting concluded and the Education Officer kindly gave us a brief tour of the entomological section of the collections held by Leeds Museum. Several members studied the collection of odonata and exuviae, whilst others discussed collections and their usefulness in providing a source of DNA to assist future generations of scientists.



Ovipositing female Emperor Dragonfly at Tophill Low – Paul Ashton

BDS Dragonfly Recording Network Meeting 2011

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wolseley Centre, 12th March 2011

The DRN database had reached 745,300 records from 84,806 sites. However around a fifth of UK squares remain unrecorded. Urban areas representing some blank spots on the map. With the publication of the new atlas in 2013 there was a push needed to help fill those blanks.

Dragonfly records can now be entered through the BTO Garden Birdwatch scheme, which should generate some records from urban gardens. The Butterfly Monitoring scheme also includes a request for dragonfly records.

Atlas progress will be available to view on the new website.

Current recording systems being used by recorders were discussed and an overview of a new online system "Living Record" was demonstrated. (The latter is now live and accessible through our website. Contact the recorders for details).

Examples of the new UK Atlas pages were shown and a request was raised for volunteers to help write text.

New look BDS website to be launched on 5th April 2011 with improved on-line recording. (Hopefully by now everyone has seen, if not take a look).

To move the BDS forward it was felt a CEO was required, whose main tasks would be fund raising, project management and publicity. (CEO now appointed – Garry Roberts)

There was a short talk by Adrian Parr on migrant species recorded in 2010. Southern Migrant Hawker appears to be colonising Essex. Southern Emerald Damselfly continues to be recorded. Dainty Damselfly has been rediscovered in Kent. The Willow Emerald is doing nicely in Suffolk, SE Essex and N Kent. Evidence of the latter ovipositing in fine branches of Willow/Alder was displayed in a photo of the blisters caused where the eggs are laid. Occasional records of exotics are occurring from imported aquatic plants from Asia, Oriental Scarlet Darter being recorded twice in 2010. The release of exotics in to the wild should not be encouraged.

Mention was made of the "Killer" shrimp found at Grafham Water and as a precaution it was felt recorders should ensure their boots/nets etc. are cleaned when moving between sites.

Anybody wanting more information about the meeting please contact myself.

Next meeting – Saturday 24th March 2012

Keith Gittens

Field Trips and Events – 2011 Summary

Rodley Nature Reserve

Saturday, 11th June 2011

This field trip coincided with Rodley's Springwatch event. There were various activities arranged including pond dipping, moth trapping, small mammal trapping and a bug hunt. John Bowers and Peter Mill lead the Branch members and members of the public around the site, stopping briefly at each pond to record and photograph whatever species were present. The following species were recorded: Blue-tailed, Common Blue, Azure and Large Red damselflies, Four-spotted and Broad-bodied Chasers, Banded Demoiselle and a recently emerged Brown Hawker, which had a damaged wing. However numbers were disappointingly low.

During the pond dipping session, several Azure Damselfly larvae were caught and, with the help of some exuviae that I had brought along, I was able to explain to the children and adults the life cycle of the dragonfly.

Denson Marston Nature Reserve Celebration Day

Saturday, 18th June 2011

Well over 100 members of the public attended this event, coming to see the various attractions that the Reserve manager, our own Steve Warrillow, had organised. As well as manning the Branch display stand I also supervised the pond dipping. Several damselfly larvae were found along with two unidentified *aeshnid* larvae. The only adults recorded were a teneral Common Blue Damselfly seeking shelter high up on a hawthorn hedge and a male Brown Hawker which had to be rescued from the pond as it had fallen in after emerging.

Oakhill, Goole

Sunday, 19th June 2011

This event was arranged with Goole and District Natural History Society and Friends of Oakhill and was well attended given the awful weather conditions with heavy rain for most of the morning, with the 15 attendees trying to spot any dragonfly on the numerous ponds on the site. Due to the rain no dragonflies were flying but I managed to find a Blue-tailed, Azure and three Emerald damselflies by searching vegetation surrounding the ponds. Two exuviae were also found, a Four-spotted Chaser and Broad-bodied Chaser, indicating that with better weather a lot more species would have been recorded.

Cleveland Naturalists Field Club / Yorkshire Dragonfly Group Joint Field Meeting

Strensall Common, Saturday 13 August 2011

This joint meeting was attended by 6 Cleveland Naturalists Field Club members, 3 Yorkshire Dragonfly Group members and 1 joint member. It had an emphasis on finding and identifying dragonflies and damselflies. Amid generally poor August weather this particular Saturday was very good with a mixture of sunshine and clouds but with no rain.

Keith Gittens from the YDG who has a very good knowledge of the habits at Strensall Common was able to lead the group to a number of ponds with special dragonfly interest. Starting from the car park on Lords Moor Lane the first pond was in open woodland, surrounded by Scots Pine, Birch and Rhododendron ponticum, here we found Common, Ruddy and Black Darters (at times on the same log); also Common Blue, Azure, Blue-tailed and Emerald Damselflies. Moving on to a large shallow

heathland pool out on the open common, (where we had lunch) we added Four-spotted Chaser. This pool was partially dried up and so not as good as normal. A newer pond in a more sheltered area produced the most dragonflies and here Emperor Dragonfly, Common Hawker and Large Red Damselfly were added to the list. Access to some areas of the common are restricted due to live firing by the army, but on this day access was possible and a visit to Kidney Pond in the middle of the firing range produced Azure Damselfly and Brown Hawker. This again was a woodland pool but one which had a much more diverse aquatic flora. Altogether 12 species of dragonflies were observed.

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 Paul Ashton for password.

www.yorkshiredragonflies.co.uk

Yorkshire Branch now on Facebook and Twitter

Paul Ashton

The Yorkshire Branch now has a Facebook page 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>

Events and Field Trips 2012

Leven Canal, East Yorkshire

Sunday 20th May 2012

Leader/Contact Details – Paul Ashton, 01430 803005

Opportunity to see Hairy Dragonfly at its Yorkshire stronghold. This will involve a four mile walk to reach and view the best part of the canal for this species.

Meet at Sandholme Bridge, 10:30am, TA100450, park along Carr Lane and walk to the bridge, please respect resident's access when parking.

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

National Dragonfly Week

9th to 17th June 2012

The BDS National Dragonfly Week launch at Rodley Nature Reserve

In conjunction with the annual Rodley N.R. Open Day

Saturday 9th June 2012.

Activities will include dragonfly walks, pond dipping, making craft dragonflies (e.g. pipe-cleaner, origami and willow dragonflies), dragonfly colouring and a dragonfly counting game for the under-8's. Aquaria with dragonfly larvae will be on display and stereomicroscopes will be available for looking at exuviae, etc. Rodley N.R. is organising butterfly and bird walks and there will be a mammal trapping walk early in the day.

It is important that dragonflies have a very high profile on the day, because this is a major publicity opportunity for the BDS and for the Yorkshire Branch. It is hoped that as many Yorkshire Branch members as possible will be able to volunteer to help out with activities such as the dragonfly walks and pond dipping. Please let Peter (gpmill@supanet.com) know if you are able to help; also if you have any suggestions.

Treeton Dyke, South Yorkshire

Saturday 14th July 2012

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

vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk

Meet at 10am, on Washfield Lane, Treeton, S60 5PU just before Treeton Cricket and Football Club car park (SK431874).

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

River Hertford, North / East Yorkshire boundary

Saturday 21st July 2012

Leader/Contact Details – Keith Gittens, 07968 840623

In conjunction with the Cayton & Flixton Wetlands Project and the YNU. As well as looking at the River Hertford for Beautiful and Banded Demoiselle, a number of farmland ponds will be investigated.

Meet at Hay Bridge north of Ganton off the A64, SE979789 - 10.00am

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

Boltby Forest, North Yorkshire

Sunday 29th July 2012

Leader/Contact Details – Bill Hall / Keith Gittens, 07968 840623

Joint meeting with the Cleveland Naturalists Field Club. A walk to investigate some recently dug ponds in Boltby Forest and Boltby Reservoir.

Meet at the entrance to Boltby Forest Drive where parking is possible, SE502872 - 10.30am

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

Strensall Common, York, North Yorkshire

Saturday 11th August 2012

Leader/Contact Details – Keith Gittens, 07968 840623

Joint meeting with the Ryedale Natural History Society. The walk will cover part of the MOD training area, the emphasis will be on dragonflies but a wide variety of lowland heath flora and fauna are possible including Marsh Gentian, Adder and Wood Lark.

Meet - Car park by cattle grid, Lords Moor Lane, SE649612 - 10.00am

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

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.

Vice-county recorders

VC61 - Paul Ashton	vc61@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01430 803005
VC62 - Keith Gittens	vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01845 523545
VC63 – Alistair McLean	vc63@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	0114 2782648
VC64 - Tom Hubball	vc64@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01535 678334
VC65 - Keith Gittens	vc65@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01347 824480

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.

VC61 South-east Yorkshire Report

Paul Ashton

The prolonged dry spring got the season off to an unprecedented start. Despite the latitude of the vice county, eight species had been recorded by the end of April. Red-eyed Damselfly, Hairy Dragonfly and Four-spotted Chasers being the highlight species. Hairy Dragonfly continues its spread with records from new sites, Leven Canal offering the best chance to see this dragonfly in good numbers.

From June the weather became less suitable for recording, with a significant down turn in the number of records received. Heathland in the VC dried out due to the lack of rain and species associated with this habitat were severely affected. Numerous observers found Skipwith Common to be very disappointing, to the point that no further visits were made due to virtual absence of dragonflies.

2012 is the final recording year for the National Atlas. There are a few areas that remain under recorded, I would ask that observers submit any records they may hold for these areas, or target them during 2012. The Wolds hold little suitable habitat, the main one being man made ponds. Don't underestimate the importance small garden ponds; though counts may be small, one garden pond last year recorded ten species, all in single figures, ensuring that one 10km square reached its target. The Holderness area to the east also remains under recorded; therefore any observation from this area would be welcome.

For a more detail view of what happened in 2011, visit the Yorkshire Branch website at www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who continued to sent in their records during 2011.



Male Hairy Dragonfly at Broomfleet Washlands – Paul Ashton

VC62 North-east Yorkshire Report

Keith Gittens

The good weather got the season off to a great start, so instead of just Large Reds, 5 species had emerged by the end of April. Four-spotted Chaser, Blue-tailed, Azure and Common Blue Damselflies all being recorded. New sites were discovered for Broad-bodied Chaser at woodland pools along the Hambleton Hills. The weather also brought recorders out and some new sites were identified along the northern edge of the North York Moors.

Unfortunately it was not to last and as we headed in to June the weather became cool and unsettled reducing the opportunity to get out and record. There was little significant rain however so sites started to dry up compounding matters. Ruddy Darter was not recorded at one site, which had previously held good numbers and Common Darter populations were erratic, generally summer records were down.

Small Red-eyed Damselfly was again recorded at a site near Scarborough but no evidence of breeding has been noted for two years. A single female Red-veined Darter was also recorded at this site, unbelievably in tandem with a Black-tailed Skimmer.

Parts of the Vale of York remain under recorded due to the lack of suitable and accessible sites.

Many thanks to those who have sent in records for 2011 regardless of how few, some are better than none! Let's hope for better weather in 2012 so we can complete atlas coverage.



Male Black-tailed Skimmer in tandem with female Red-veined Darter – Keith Gittens

VC63 South-west Yorkshire Report

Tom Hubball

2011 was a mixed year for VC63. The south and east fared reasonably well, although numbers recorded were down with some species only present in very small numbers compared to a 'normal' year but further north and west it was a different story completely with very few sightings and numbers markedly down on previous years. Several recorders commented that some ponds, particularly at higher altitudes, had no notable dragonfly activity throughout the summer and had appeared to have lost their dragonflies altogether. Let us hope that this year sees an improvement in the weather and I hope that these ponds are recolonised in the near future.

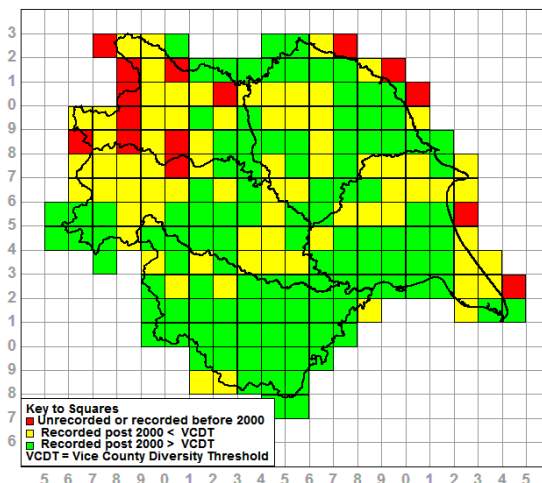
VC64 and VC65 Reports

Tom Hubball

It was a poor year for VC64 and VC65 with a late start to the season over in the far west of Yorkshire compared to the better conditions recorded over in the south and east. The inclement weather conditions persisted throughout the summer, limiting recording activity and when dragonflies were noted, numbers were significantly down on previous years. Whether this was solely due to the two previous cold winters remains to be seen but I suspect that the freezing conditions seriously hampered the larval development and the mortality rate may have been quite high too.

As 2012 is the final year of the BDS atlas project, VC65 needs particular attention. Mostly covering the limestone area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and north into Teesdale, this area is particularly under-recorded and ANY records would be greatly appreciated.

Yorkshire (VC61-65) 10km squares July 2011



National Atlas progress map highlighting under recorded areas.

Trip Report: Nerja, Spain - 4th to 10th September 2011

Chris Abbott

This was a family holiday to Nerja staying in St Juan de Capistrano which is about 2 km north of the centre of Nerja. Natural History interest was mainly in the Dragonflies found in this part of Spain. Information on likely sites was found by checking Google earth and also advice was given by Paul Winter who is familiar with the River Guadalhorce near Malaga and Mick Richardson of LojaWildlife.

4th September

Arrived late Saturday night. Virtually the first bird I saw next morning from the villa balcony was a black Wheatear on the roof of the villa next door. A pair were seen on several occasions. Also Bee-eaters heard this morning and on several other mornings. They tended to be quite high and may have been migrating. There were a couple of Willow Warblers in the complex gardens.

p.m Walked from the town beach to the mouth of the Rio Chillar in Nerja. I thought it might be dry at this time of year but there was a reasonable stream of water and good dragonflies. Emperor 2, Epaulet Skimmer 10+, Scarlet Chaser 2, Orange-winged Dropwing 6.

Back at the villa a Black Kite went west along the ridge behind the apartment. This turned out to be the only raptor seen from the apartment during the week.



Orange-winged Dropwing

5th September

4.00 p.m Rio Chillar, Nerja town centre. Orange-winged Dropwing 6+, Epaulet Skimmer 20+, Iberian Blue-tailed Damselfly 1, Scarlet Chaser 2. Copper Demoiselle 1. Willow Warbler 3.



Banded Groundling

6th September

8.00 to 10.00 a.m. Sunny and over 20 degrees but very little activity. Western Spectre 1, Epaulet Skimmer 2.

p.m went to Rio Velez at Torre del Mar. Great site. Wide river bed with marginal pasture and reeds. The river was in full flood, although I wasn't aware of any recent rain so may have been run off from the reservoir. Epaulet Skimmer 20+, Scarlet Chaser 20+, Emperor 10, Lesser Emperor 1, Violet Dropwing 2, Black Percher 1.

Highlight was a single Curlew Sandpiper feeding in a patch of mud. I was able to watch from 15 feet away and get decent photo's with my 150 mm macro lens.

Black Percher was a new one for me. Mick Richardson had reported seeing this species at this site on his blog.

7th September

Went back to Rio Velez this time a little later between 4.00 and 6.00. It was much quieter. No Epaulet Skimmers were flying. The river was at normal summer level. No Black Percher despite searching. Saw Orange Winged Dropwing 1, Violet Dropwing 4, Red-veined Darter 1.

8th September

p.m Drove to Rio Guadalfo at Lobres. This river looked very promising on Google Earth as it seemed to have a good flow of water and series of waterfalls. (optimistically hoping for Ringed Cascader). The river did look good but there were few dragonflies and access was not easy due to a high flood wall. Orange-winged Dropwing 1, Violet Dropwing 1.

I then drove to Charca del Suarez near Motril. I knew it did not open till 6.00 p.m which was too late for me but I decided to look round outside the reserve.

There is a good track alongside the reserve boundary next to a stream and open access to rough grass and scrub. The fields held at least 10 Black Perchers which posed well for photo's. I only searched a small area so there must be a big population. Also saw Lesser Emperor 1, and Scarlet Chasers plus a Kingfisher.

I did intend to visit the reserve itself during opening hours but never got the time.

9th September

Nerja 9.00 – 10.00 p.m. Epaulet Skimmer 2, Emperor 1, Ringed Plover 2. No Orange-winged Dropwing out at that time. 1 Western Spectre under the main river bridge in the town.

10.9.11. Last day and with an evening flight from Malaga we went to the beach at Guadalmar so whilst the family sun bathed I was able to walk to the Parque Natural Desembocadura del Guadalhorce. Highlight were Banded Groundlings on the path alongside the west river. There were at least 4 male and 2 females. This was a new species for me. Paul Winter had seen this species here and on previous years. I looked for Long Skimmer known to occur here but failed to find any. Other species. Violet dropwing 5+, Scarlet Chaser 2, Emperor and Lesser Emperor, Black-tailed skimmer 1,



Banded Groundling

Altogether a great trip with plenty of photo's. I had planned to visit the Rio Guadalhorce towards Pizzara but didn't as there were plenty of sites local to Nerja.

Seeking out the Scottish Specialities

Paul Ashton

Once we've got to grips with our local species, I like many, start to think about planning trips to other locations to see our other British species. One of these areas is Scotland, in search of the following key species; Northern Damselfly, Azure Hawker, Downy Emerald, Brilliant Emerald, Northern Emerald, "Highland" Darter and White-faced Darter. One of these, Highland Darter has recently been confirmed, through DNA, to be the same species as Common Darter. They are however quite distinctive, and well worth seeing.

Scotland is a large place and many of these species are spread out over a large area. Many of us will visit for holidays, therefore time is limited. Many visits to sites will be first time visits, probably for a few short hours, making it difficult to understand the sites dynamics and how the target species are using it. Water is everywhere, and initial expectations are that there will be dragonflies everywhere; this is far from the truth. The vast areas of open moorland will offer very little in the way of new species for observers, instead best results are found in areas with plenty of shelter from surrounding trees. Most of us also want to get good photographic opportunities, which can be frustrating at breeding sites due to the frenetic activity, so areas away from water are usually the best places to get those photos.

I will deal with each species in order, offering my experience and pitfalls to connect with these species.

Northern Damselfly

The best site for this species is the roadside pool in Abernethy Forest. The small pool is on the road to the Loch Garten at NH954192. There is limited opportunity to park at the side of the road opposite the pool. A boardwalk has recently been installed to prevent habitat damage, caused by people walking round the edge of the pool. The species can be seen well from here, but is difficult to photograph. The best photo opportunities can be found by walking into the forest about 50m to the east. Here the damselflies are not involved in breeding activity around the pool, and this also avoids damaging the fragile habitat. They can still be very active in warm sunny conditions and will be pairing up before heading to the pool.



Male Northern Damselfly – Paul Ashton

Azure Hawker

Probably the hardest species to photograph. As with many species, the further north you travel, the darker their colouration, probably to aid heat absorption. Common Hawker is definitely darker in appearance than we are used to, with antehumeral and thoracic stripes appearing very much less marked and fainter in appearance. Also beware the blue form female Common Hawker which is more common in this area. Common Hawker can be numerous and over many visits I have only seen single Azure Hawkers. If you spot a blue dragonfly keeping low to the ground, it's definitely worth checking it out. The best place I have found for this species is Slattadale at NG888721. From the picnic site head north along the footpath, when reaching the bridge across the stream, explore the path to the left checking out all the dead tree stumps and boulders. I encountered up to twelve individuals in this area.



Azure Hawker – Paul Ashton

Downy Emerald

Easy to see, difficult to photograph. Best place is Glen Affric with this species being found on many of the small lochans in the forest. Park in the car park at the end of the road at NH200233. Head over the bridge, walk for around 1km along the southern track of Loch Affric. After 1km a small lochan can be seen through the trees at NH192229. Beware, the ground here is very uneven, with many obscure holes under the heather. Adult males can be seen, even in overcast conditions regularly flying around the edge of the lochan. Occasionally they will settle, but they are difficult to track down and locate through the heather when they have settled. The other emerald species can also be found in the local area, though I have never encountered them, so take care with identification. A good search of the heather up to a metre from the edge of the loch can result in good numbers of exuviae being found of this species, along with Four-spotted Chaser, the adults of which appear quite tame!



Downy Emerald – David Ashton



Tame Four-spotted Chaser! – Paul Ashton

Brilliant Emerald

The best site for this species is Loch Bran, south-east of Loch Ness at NH506191. It can also be found on many of the other lochans in the local area, though this is the most accessible. There is no risk of confusion with the other emerald species here, as none of them are present in this area. They are active in sunny conditions, but will drop down in to the low scrubby areas when a cloud covers the sun. When disturbed they will readily fly up into the surrounding trees.



Brilliant Emerald – Paul Ashton



Loch Bran – Paul Ashton

Northern Emerald

Fairly easy to encounter in sheltered areas along the south-west side of Loch Maree. The easiest place is the Beinn Eighe Visitor Centre at NH019629, with individuals seen patrolling around the edge of the car park. The clearing to the south-east is also a good area to check, though care must be taken as the ground here is very uneven with deep water filled holes! Another good area to check is the boggy area at NH003646. Park at the Glas Leitir Trails car park at NH001650; walk back 200m south-west along the road before cutting in to the forest clearing.



Female Northern Emerald – Paul Ashton



The boggy area at NH003646, Loch Maree – Paul Ashton

“Highland Darter”

Recently confirmed through DNA analysis to be the same species as Common Darter. Fairly easy to come across during the flight season, though due to the dark colouration in females, they could be easily overlooked or confused with Black Darter.



Female “Highland” Darter – Paul Ashton



Male “Highland” Darter – Paul Ashton

White-faced Darter

The easiest location with good opportunity for photography is a small boggy pool in Abernethy Forest. A boardwalk has recently been installed making it easy to view the pool. Drive south from the RSPB Loch Garten car park. Take the first right turn and park safely on the roadside. Walk back to the junction and turn left, keep looking left as you come to the clearing where the boardwalk should be easily seen, highlighting the location of the pool. Careful scanning of the vegetation adjacent to the boardwalk should result in some exuviae being found.



Male White-faced Darter – Paul Ashton



Abernethy Forest Bog Pool – Paul Ashton

Summary

If you're planning a trip to Scotland, I hope this article goes some way to helping you see these species with a little more ease. Please ensure that you send in all your records to Pat Batty, who has the onerous task of collating all the records for Scotland. By submitting records from my trips, I've already made a difference by adding new species to 10km squares. On a final note, as already mentioned, some species are a lot darker in appearance. I've not seen it mentioned in any literature, but even common species such as Common Blue Damselfly appear to be affected, many segment containing more black, with what appears to be quite a common aberration; so beware the field guides that state "all blue segment 8 & 9".



Male Common Blue Damselfly with black markings on segment 8, Loch Bran – Paul Ashton



Male Common Blue Damselfly with black markings on segment 8, Glen Affric – Paul Ashton

Erasipteron Bolsoveri; The Gracefully Winged of Bolsover

Spring 2012 Creswell Crags unearths the real Beast of Bolsover



In 1978, two miners working in Bolsover Colliery discovered a fossil of the oldest dragonfly known in the United Kingdom. Known locally as 'The Beast Bolsover' the dragonfly had a wingspan of over 20cm and belongs to the now-extinct variety of dragonflies known as 'Protodonata'. The specimen has been preserved in the coal measures dates back to the Carboniferous Period and would have been flying around 350 million years ago. The fossil being celebrated in a series of events and exhibitions at Creswell Crags to launch at the end of March at Creswell Crags and is on loan by kind permission of the Natural History Museum in London. The exhibition marks the first time since the discovery that the nationally important geological specimen returns to the region, and Creswell Crags are now looking for people to come forward with any information to help tell the story of its discovery.

Project Officer, Rebecca Clay, says 'It is very exciting to have such an important part of the area's natural history on display near to where it was discovered. It also gives us the opportunity to present the fossil in new way by telling the story of its discovery from the people that were there at the time. We really want the local community to have a say in how the exhibition looks and feels.'

For more information and images, please contact Rebecca Clay at Creswell Crags Visitor Centre on 01909 720378 or email Rebecca.clay@creswell-craggs.org.uk.

Craggs Road, Welbeck, Worksop, Notts, S80 3LH
www.creswell-craggs.org.uk

Some Pond and East Riding News

Richard Shillaker

Volunteer-based national pond monitoring network

North-east Yorkshire has been identified as one of three areas in England to trial a new volunteer-based monitoring network, using a habitat-centered approach, with ponds being selected as the initial test habitat.

Typically, volunteer-based monitoring has focused on one particular taxonomic group (e.g. just birds or just butterflies). This new approach will establish if multi-taxa monitoring (often part of professional ecological surveys) can be carried out effectively by volunteers.

The project has funding from Natural England, with two years of field trials funded by DEFRA starting this April. Development of the volunteer network is co-ordinated by Pond Conservation and by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, in collaboration with other groups including the British Dragonfly Society. More detailed information about the project appears in this year's Spring edition of the BDS Dragonfly News.

In the first year, practical aspects of the project will be tested e.g. surveying methods, the appetite of volunteers to acquire and apply new skills, and the ease of using an online recording system (Indicia) that will be specifically tailored to this project.

For me, one of the attractions of the project is the impetus to extend my dragonfly ID ability beyond adult dragonflies (to larvae and exuviae as well), and the potential to gain more experience with the identification of other aquatic invertebrates (not forgetting aquatic plants).

If you would like more information please email Pond Conservation at info@pondconservation.org.uk, or call 01865 483249 and ask for Corey Cannon or Penny Williams.

Ponds in East Yorkshire

A draft Habitat Action Plan for ponds in East Yorkshire was discussed at the January 2012 meeting of the East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Partnership. The proposed actions included restoring ponds on farmland and, interestingly, historic dew ponds on the Wolds. However, there was some uncertainty as to the existence of a useful inventory for ponds in this area. Proposed targets (e.g. how many ponds could be tackled) attracted much debate.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has initiated a Parish Ponds project in East Yorkshire, Scarborough and Ryedale in order to support parishes wishing to improve their ponds, see <http://www.ywt.org.uk/news/2011/11/18/protecting-parish-ponds>. This project is reported to have generated plenty of interest from local community groups.

Draft Species Guidelines for selection of Local Wildlife Sites in East Yorkshire

In the East Riding Local Wildlife Sites System* there is a general presumption in favour of assessing sites on the basis of habitat criteria. However it is proposed to supplement this with selection criteria based on particular species or assemblages of species. Dragonflies are addressed in the current draft species guidelines by the following site selection criteria.

- Any site that supports a breeding assemblage of 10 Odonata species or has recorded a total of 15 species within 5 years.
- Any site that supports a significant breeding population of a species which is considered to be rare in the East Riding. The species cited here is the Small Red-eyed Damselfly.
- Any site that supports a population of an invertebrate species which is considered to be nationally rare, threatened, or a priority for conservation (these criteria are more closely defined in the draft guidelines). The Variable Damselfly meets the criteria because it has Red Data 'Near Threatened' status.

I am informed that Broomfleet and Oxmardyke washlands, which are known to be particularly good for dragonflies (including the Variable Damselfly) were designated as Local Wildlife Sites in December 2011 apparently based on habitat criteria under the mixed habitat guideline with specific interest in fen, standing open water and woodland.

[* **Note:** Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are areas of valuable semi-natural or natural habitats such as ancient woodlands, species rich grasslands and heathland. They are a non-statutory designation which places no additional legal restrictions on the management of the land they cover but LWS are afforded material consideration in the planning system. This means that should a planning application or forward plan allocation be proposed on or near a Local Wildlife Site then the impact of the scheme on the site would be taken into account in reaching a decision on whether to approve the scheme.

The very best wildlife habitats are likely to have been given statutory protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Natural England, although these are only representative and do not cover all important areas. The LWS system is used to identify the best examples of other high quality habitats, outside of internationally and nationally designated sites.]

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.

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>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>Ceriatrigon 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

Green Heart Nature Improvement Areas

Tom Hubball

A dozen large-scale nature areas have recently been unveiled by the Government as part of efforts to boost wildlife, help rare species and restore habitats. It is hoped the twelve areas, ranging from northern Devon to the Humberhead Levels, will restore wetlands, grasslands and peat bogs, improve rivers, plant trees and make new ponds. The “nature improvement areas” will share £7.5 million over three years in order to help local groups carry out work to improve, increase and link up networks of wildlife sites in their regions, in a bid to encourage threatened and declining species.

Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman said: “Each of these projects has something different to offer. The exciting wildlife projects are the result of different organisations all working together with a common purpose – to safeguard our wildlife for generations to come.”

Two of these areas are Yorkshire sites and they offer great opportunities to conserve and enhance the dragonfly fauna in our area.

The Humberhead Levels Nature Improvement Area is part of the vast flatlands straddling the borders of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and offers the best opportunity in England to develop a major multi-functional wetland landscape in a largely unrecognised biodiversity hotspot. The NIA covers 49,700 hectares and will be administered and driven by the Humberhead Levels Partnership and its main aim is to create an internationally renowned, unique wetland landscape, supporting thriving communities, economy, ecosystem services and wildlife, enhancing existing internationally important wetlands (the Humber and the Humberhead Peatlands), other SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites and includes the Broomfleet Washlands Project. These sites will be reconnected by working with local farmers to create ribbons of habitat on unproductive drain-sides, headlands and wet field corners associated with the important rivers and dykes that traverse the area. Wildlife will be free to move through adjacent farmland, the land's economic value will be maintained and its resilience to climate change increased. This programme will create or restore at least 1427Ha of wetland habitat. A key aspect will be progress towards reinstatement of England's largest lowland mire system. Success here will increase the amount of carbon sequestered into newly forming peat and wetland soils; a vital ecosystem service.

The Humberhead Levels NIA will develop community capacity to get involved with wildlife sites. This will operate in three distinct ways; i) improved interpretation and face to face contact on five sites with existing visitor infrastructure will encourage an extra 6000 visits to local wildlife sites over the next three years; ii) new environmental education programmes will operate from three different sites in the area and; iii) targeted volunteer development and training will deliver an extra 3910 hours of volunteer input. Better integrated land use will make the area more resilient to climate change. Closer partnership working will align farming with more sustainable flood defence, water supply and biodiversity conservation. The impetus provided to the local green economy through, for example, our work on biomass to energy projects, could provide new jobs and sustainable development opportunities in an area of multiple deprivation within 10 years. This could increase work for conservation management contractors and for green tourism employees from cafe staff to nature guides. Connecting local communities to their wildlife sites will increase independence from central

government funding and increase local pride and stewardship, foster social wellbeing and provide significant health benefits.

The Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area will help local people deliver their vision to restore the ecological functionality of the river Dearne, its floodplain and its link to habitats on surrounding sandstone and limestone hills. The vision is to create a 1300ha core of wetland and woodland habitats which will be buffered by 2690ha of open land and reclaimed industrial areas whose biodiversity areas will be enhanced. This will link up core areas and target farmland areas of poor ecological functionality covering 1700ha. The restoration areas will cover 500ha of semi natural grasslands, new woodlands and wetlands. It will also enhance 1150ha of farmland and 150ha or woodland areas through targeted advice in the poor ecologically functioning zones. A landowner and farmers working group has been set up to increase farmer involvement in the project. There will also be an extensive community outreach programme through the "Hidden Gems of the Dearne" project.

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Front Cover Photo: Common Blue Damselfly at Timble Ings – Geoff Hall