



YORKSHIRE
DRAGONFLY GROUP



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Front Cover Photograph:

*Male Willow Emerald Damselfly (Chalcolestes viridis) at East Park, Hull
Courtesy of Richard Shillaker*

This magazine is produced for YDG members and includes articles by the members. Don't wait until February – if you have enjoyed the season or had a good holiday please consider sending an article.

For those who have contributed, many thanks for all the amazing articles and photographs.

June Gittens

Editor

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Keith Gittens

In October 2018 June and I visited Kirkby on Bain in Lincolnshire, believed to be the most northerly site for the recent UK colonist, Willow Emerald Damselfly. Some 50 miles south of the Humber it seemed inevitable that the species would eventually make it to Yorkshire, the question being, how long would it take? Not as long as we thought! Combined with records from new sites for Small Red-eyed Damselfly, 2019 has been an exciting year of potential range expansion.

A survey of Hull City's dragonflies proved a fortunate coincidence and resulted in some of the first records for Yorkshire of Willow Emerald. You can download and read the full report on the YDG website. A short report is published in this issue of Skimmer. Congratulations to Africa Gomez and Dick Shillaker for producing such an excellent paper.

As ever we had a good turnout for events. Our combined stalls with the BDS at the York Insect Festival and the Leeds Bird Fair had plenty of activities for children and proved popular. At the Leeds Bird Fair, Rodley Nature Reserve was officially launched as a BDS Dragonfly Hotspot. Look out for upcoming 'Hotspot' events on the Rodley or YDG website.

This year we should see the publication of the BDS report, 'The State of Dragonflies 2020'. This an update to the atlas published in 2013. It will be interesting to see if the increasing extremes of weather are impacting on our dragonfly fauna. We know there are winners with some species expanding their range, but will there be any losers?

Once again, we have some excellent articles for Skimmer and I must thank all who took the time to contribute.

While, as I write this, most of the UK remains saturated by the recent rains, let us hope we have a good summer and I look forward to meeting some of you at events throughout the season.

Don't forget to look out for further signs of Willow Emerald colonising Yorkshire in 2020!

RECORDERS REPORTS FOR 2019

VC61 SOUTH-EAST YORKSHIRE

Martin Roberts

The total number of records submitted for VC61 this year was 1335, a 16% increase over 2018; maintaining the consistent upward trend of recent years and reaching a new record for the vice-county.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the first record of Willow Emerald Damselfly in the VC. A single male was seen at the lake in East Park, Hull on 8th September and a single male was also present two days later. Extensive searching around the lake on 14th September failed to find any further individuals, but a single female was seen at North Cave Wetlands (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve) on 8th October. All three sightings were supported by clear photographs. The arrival had been eagerly anticipated as this species has spread dramatically in the last few years and had been reported at several sites along the south bank of the Humber a few days earlier.

Vagrant Emperor (a single male in each case), was seen at three locations along the East coast from Spurn to Filey, on four occasions between 9th and 22nd June. A female Lesser Emperor was caught in a moth trap at Flamborough on 31 July. Two male Southern Migrant Hawkers were seen at Spurn Bird Observatory on 3rd August. There were relatively few records of Red-veined Darter this year but the species was recorded at Spurn, a relatively consistent site for this species, on at least two occasions.

Two members of the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group carried out an extensive survey of Odonata at a wide variety of locations in the city of Hull and the immediate surrounding area. A total of 19 species were recorded, many with evidence of breeding. It is notable that Large Red Damselfly is rarely recorded in that area. The results will be presented to Hull City Council in the hope that it will be useful in support of their Biodiversity Action Plan.

For the second year running, YDG members monitored a number of newly restored dew ponds on the Yorkshire Wolds for Odonata, on behalf of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Slightly greater numbers of the expected common species were recorded this year.

VC62 AND NORTH-EAST AND VC65 NORTH-WEST YORKSHIRE

Keith Gittens

The year proved to be an exceptional one for new sites for Small Red-eyed Damselfly. VC62 records were received from along the east coast between Scarborough, north through to Guisborough. There were also sightings, in VC65, along the A1 corridor from Nosterfield Nature Reserve to Scorton Quarry, near Richmond. A first for VC65!

The site at Scorton also produced records of Red-veined Darter in early July.

To top this, and a first for all Yorkshire, was a sighting of Willow Emerald Damselfly from a pond at Harwood Dale within the North Yorkshire Moors National Park on 26th August.

Wykeham Lakes, a series of worked out gravel pits near Scarborough, are proving something of a hotspot for Odonata. The site has a series of attractive spring fed fishing lakes and a larger water sports lake. Up to now 17 species have been recorded, including both species of Red-eyed Damselfly, and in June 2019 a record of Hairy Dragonfly. Dawnay Estates who own and operate the site are keen to promote the wildlife of the area and now allow public access. Thanks must go to the estate for allowing recording, Chris Bull for his recording effort and I look forward to more finds in the year to come.

Conservation work in conjunction with Fresh Water Habitats Trust and Butterfly Conservation continued in early 2019 at Worlds End, near York, and later in the year at Boltby Reservoir, near Thirsk. Both sites benefited from scrub clearance that threatened to shade the water margins. The dragonfly fauna at Boltby is developing nicely and hawk species were much in evidence on a visit in late August.

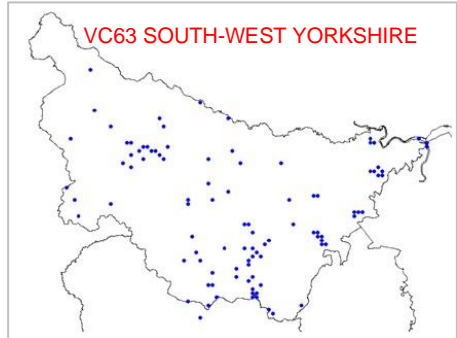
Many thanks to all those who volunteered or who sent in records through 2019.

VC63 SOUTH-WEST YORKSHIRE

Alistair McLean

Weather-wise, 2019 was an interesting year, having seen some of the warmest temperatures ever recorded locally, but whilst also being extremely wet. It was the wettest year on record, according to Weston Park Weather Station.

The newly established Small Red-eyed Damselfly does not appear to have continued to expand its range onto the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal as yet. We will continue to monitor this in 2020. The Red-eyed Damselfly does now appear to be well and truly established at a few sites across the region.



In total, we received 948 observations, covering 20 species for VC63 in 2019. All of the established species were well represented, and records are spread nicely across the whole county. I did not receive any observations of the Golden-ringed Dragonfly for 2019, which appears to have recently founded a colony around the Agden Bog Nature Reserve (SK2593). I would be grateful for any reports on how the species is doing in this area for 2020.

As always, thank you to the many people who have submitted observations for South West Yorkshire this year.

BDS COUNTY DRAGONFLY RECORDERS

VC61 – Martin Roberts	vc61@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01904 761918
VC62 – Keith Gittens	vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01347 868606
VC63 – Alistair McLean	vc63@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01142 782648
VC64 – Simon Joseph	vc64@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	07972 054098
VC65 – Keith Gittens	vc65@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk	01347 868606

VC64 MID-WEST YORKSHIRE

Simon Joseph

450 records for 21 species at 44 sites were received in 2019. The most frequently recorded were Common Darters, Common Blue Damselflies, Blue-tailed Damselflies and Brown Hawkers. The least frequent were Southern Migrant Hawker, Small Red-eyed Damselfly and Golden-ringed Dragonfly.

Last year I reported there were no Small Red-eyed Damselfly records. These have since been submitted, so they are maintaining their presence. Willow Emerald Damselfly have expanded close to the South East edge of the vice county so we will keep an eye out for this species. No reports of Red-veined Darters this year.

The high point was Rodley Nature Reserve, Leeds, being designated a dragonfly hotspot. On the day (22nd June) seven species were recorded and there was an open day with stands and walks. They have worked hard to create a mix of habitats, all beautifully landscaped and with information boards. It is well worth a visit.

A couple of fun teaching sessions and walks were held at Fairburn Ings and St.Aidans RSPB reserves, and over 170 records were submitted by their birdwatching group. At Fairburn Ings, a lone female Southern Migrant Hawker was photographed, ironically on the same day I was in a muddy ditch on Canvey Island looking for them.

My local site, Grindleton Forest Pools, dried up briefly in the summer but there was no noticeable effect on the range of species or number of individuals.

One site, Lomeshaye Marsh LNR, a small site next to an industrial estate, has suffered a decline since an aquarium was emptied into it and the site is now choked with crassula.

Interestingly, I have made contact with the Ministry of Justice Dragonfly Champion outside my area and am hoping to give some teaching sessions to the men in a prison in 2020, and help them with their pond.

WILLOW EMERALD DAMSELFLY IN HULL



A trip to East Park in Hull on 8th September 2019 proved to be more notable than I could have imagined. I had gone to look for evidence of Migrant Hawkers breeding in order to contribute to the Hull City of Dragons project.

As I approached the boardwalk at

the eastern end of the lake I saw a small 'dragonfly' fly out of a bush overhanging the lake. I tried to relocate it but failed and was soon distracted by mating and ovipositing Migrant Hawkers. Later, I returned to the spot where I had seen the smaller 'dragonfly', and in nearby tall emergent vegetation picked out the distinctive spread wings and green body of an 'Emerald' damselfly. I was pleased to record an 'Emerald' as I had not seen one at this site before and took plenty of photos.

Back home, examination of photos on my computer revealed it was not our normal Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*). I wondered if it might be a Willow Emerald Damselfly (*Chalcolestes viridis*) but I had not seen one before and didn't know its key features. The field guide (dated 2002) I had taken with me to East Park didn't help as it had no description of the species and so I needed to consult my 2014 edition. The pale brown pterostigma and the prominent forward pointing spur on the side of the thorax indicated that it was a Willow Emerald and this was confirmed by Martin Roberts. Incurved anal appendages identified the individual as male.

This sighting (photo on front cover) was apparently the first verified record of the species in South-east Yorkshire (VC61). However, it was not unexpected as the Willow Emerald has been spreading northwards. I was aware at the time of recent reports in 2019 from Cleethorpes and Alkborough Flats, as well as one from Harwood Dale just north of Scarborough (the first Yorkshire record).

Following my sighting, Africa Gómez visited East Park on the 10th September and photographed a male Willow Emerald near the boardwalk.

I returned with Martin Roberts on the 14th September, and joined another dragonfly enthusiast on the boardwalk, but we failed to find a Willow Emerald. There were however further local records during the autumn of 2019, from Far Ings and North Cave Wetlands.

An update on the range expansion of the Willow Emerald Damselfly in the UK is provided by Adrian Parr in the December 2019 BDS newsletter. He notes that the sightings around the Humber and in North Yorkshire (see table for more details, including evidence of breeding) are the most northerly for the species in the UK to date. They represent a considerable range expansion, of up to nearly 150 kilometres, compared to the most northerly sighting in 2018, at Kirkby on Bain, Lincolnshire. This follows on from the well documented population expansion in the UK since 2007.

Willow Emeralds like to sunbathe and lay their eggs on the branches of waterside trees, such as willow and alder, which are abundant at East Park (although mostly on islands at some distance from the lakeside). Further surveying, including looking for the characteristic ladder-like oviposition scar tracks, will be needed to see if this damselfly establishes a breeding population in East Park. Adrian notes that their scar tracks are mostly found on thin (0.5 - 1mm diameter) branches, particularly vertical branches, and can persist after the eggs hatch in spring.

Adult Willow Emerald Damselflies seen around the Humber and in North Yorkshire in 2019				
Date	Location	Vice-county	Details of sighting	Comments
25 August	Cleethorpes Country Park	VC 54	2 males, 1 female	
25 August to 23 October	Alkborough Flats	VC 54	Max. of at least 10 individuals on 26 August & 20 September	Sightings on several days. Mating reported. Tandem pairs ovipositing on 20 September
26 August	Harwood Dale	VC 62	1 male	Not seen on follow up visits
8 September 10 September	East Park Hull	VC 61	1 male 1 male	Not seen on 14 September
21 September 30 September 31 October	Far Ings	VC 54	1 female 1 individual 1 individual	Possibly 1 individual on 26th August
8 October	North Cave Wetlands	VC 61	1 female	

Notes:

Table based on information provided by BDS vice-county recorders, with additional information from Simon Wellock (Far Ings) and Graham Catley (Alkborough Flats)

The presence of Willow Emerald Damselfly at each of these locations on at least one occasion was verified, based on photographic evidence, by the relevant BDS vice-county recorder (VC 54 North Lincolnshire, VC 61 South-east Yorkshire, VC 62 North-east Yorkshire).

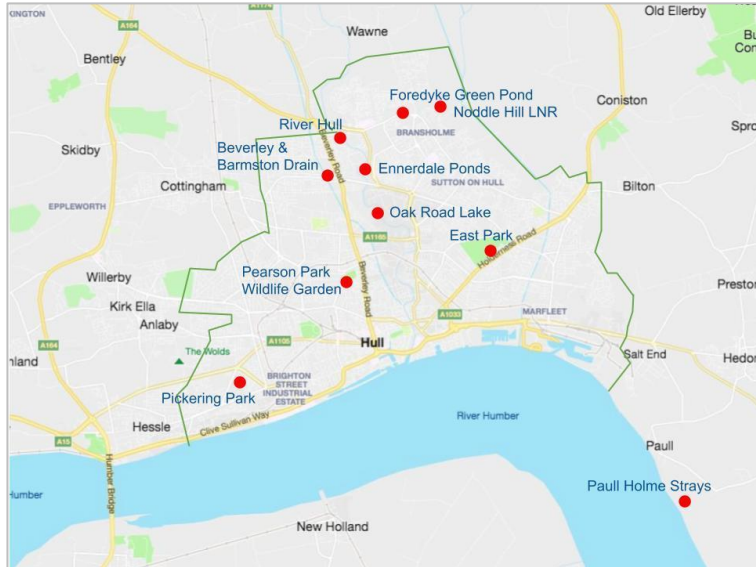
No records of Willow Emerald Damselflies were received by BDS recorders for the three other Yorkshire vice-counties (VC 63, 64 and 65).

Richard Shillaker



DAMSELFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES IN HULL

In 2019 we set out to record the distribution of damselflies and dragonflies in the city of Hull and the immediate surrounding area in the East Riding, including villages such as Cottingham and Wawne but not extending as far as Beverley.



Best sites for dragonflies in the survey area. The green line is the approximate Hull city boundary.

We were particularly keen to obtain evidence of breeding, which was based primarily on observations of adult behaviour with only limited searching for exuviae and no larval sampling. Rather than attempt a systematic survey, sites were visited when it was convenient to do so, although for some sites we did try to include an early and late season visit and some sites were visited multiple times. Records provided by other naturalists, and by members of the public, were sometimes the only ones for a particular site.

Although Hull has a good number of freshwater habitats (River Hull, drainage ditches, lakes and ponds), and a natural history society which was founded in 1880, we were not aware of a previous city-wide Odonata survey. Indeed, the need for such a survey was recognised in the Hull Biodiversity Action Plan of 2002.

We obtained records for 19 species in 2019, with breeding evidence for 14. This was based on 618 records provided by 24 observers (note: a record is a sighting

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of a species on a particular day at a particular site and therefore is not the same as the number of individuals seen). Records were obtained from 71 km² grid squares, 33 of which were located, at least partly, within the Hull city boundary.

The most commonly recorded species were Migrant Hawker, Common Darter, Blue-tailed Damselfly and Common Blue Damselfly (each with more than 60 records). The ten best sites for Odonata in 2019 are shown in the map; the highest number of species was recorded at Foredyke Green Pond (11 species).



Foredyke Green Pond (TA100348)

Lakes in public parks, especially East Park and Pickering Park (10 and 8 species recorded in 2019, respectively), were key sites for Odonata diversity. These two parks compared well with sites already recognised by the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group as good spots for dragonfly watching, i.e. Paull Holme Strays, Noddle Hill Nature Reserve and Oak Road Lake (nine to ten species recorded in 2019).

Important records from East Park comprised the sighting of a male Willow Emerald Damselfly by the main lake (see separate article) and the abundance of Small Red-eyed Damselflies ovipositing on floating vegetation in the model boating lake.

At Pickering Park Lake, the large number of Migrant Hawkers on 14th September is notable; we estimated 60-100 males and six females, with plenty

of evidence of breeding. A significant emergence of Broad-bodied Chasers was recorded at the wildlife garden pond in Pearson Park.

We were pleased to find new sites for Red-eyed Damselfly and Small Red-eyed Damselfly, as well as for Banded Demoiselle which was recorded on the River Hull within the city boundary, although there was no evidence of this species breeding. Promoting the project via Twitter resulted in a number of significant records from members of the public including photographic evidence of Hairy Dragonfly breeding in a garden pond in Hessele.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Large Red Damselfly, a species considered to be a widespread and common breeding species in Britain, was not recorded during our survey. Although this is consistent with the few records from the Hull area for previous years, and its scarcity in nearby Holderness (see Paul Ashton's *Dragonflies of South-east Yorkshire*), it is a finding worthy of further investigation.

We put some effort into finding and collating historical records, and added to iRecord some of those that hadn't been submitted before. Notably, prior to 2000 we could find records for only ten species. Particularly interesting is a published report dated 1857 of a female Vagrant Darter from the Hull area.

The summer of 2019 was the end of a run of two dry years. Given the very wet autumn and winter we've just had, we are intending to conduct the survey again in 2020. We are expecting that some ponds which dried up last year may hold water for longer this year. An MSc student from Hull University will also undertake a survey of larval Odonata.

Hopefully, our findings can be used to increase awareness and appreciation of nature within the city of Hull, as well as providing reference data for any future monitoring of local biodiversity, e.g. to detect the effects of climate change. Our records are intended also to contribute to the 2020 Atlas of the BDS.

A full report of our 2019 City of Dragons survey is available on the YDG website.

Africa Gómez and Richard Shillaker

DRAGONFLIES OF SARDINIA

In June 2018 I travelled on a group holiday with Naturetrek to see the Dragonflies of Sardinia. There were 13 of us plus two Italian leaders and we all met on arrival at Alghero airport after a flight from Stansted. We arrived about 10.30pm so it was straight to bed for a very early start the following day, which began with a boat trip to Asinara Island off the North-west corner. Once there we 'enjoyed' a hot and rather arduous trip in Landrovers to visit ponds all over the island. The highlight for me was my first ever sighting of the gorgeous Violet Dropwing (*Trithemis annulata*) which turned out to be quite common in the area and very tolerant of photographers.



Violet Dropwing

The following day was more relaxed with the morning spent at Lago Baratz where Long Skimmer (*Orthetrum trinacria*) and Broad Scarlet (*Crocothemis erythraea*) were easily photographed. There were also literally thousands of Black-tailed Skimmers at this lake. The afternoon was spent at a rather breezy nature reserve near the coast, though I did see Green-eyed (Norfolk) Hawker (*Aeshna Isosceles*).

The next day we transferred to our second hotel at Su Baione, near the centre of Sardinia. This was a lovely country house hotel rather reminiscent of a game lodge.

On the way, at Lago Cuga we saw Lesser and Vagrant Emperor (*Anax parthenope*) and (*Anax ephippiger*) and a small number of Banded Groundling (*Brachythemis impartita*).



Long Skimmer

This is really a Central African species that has spread northwards, and I was disappointed not to encounter the large swarms of this species that often occur, flying around at knee height.

After dinner we strolled through the cork woodland listening to Scop's Owls and photographed geckos which were climbing the hotel walls.

The next day at Su Gologone, unusually high water levels meant that we couldn't explore the whole area but we saw hundreds of Copper Demoiselle (*Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*), Island Bluetail (*Ischnura genei*) and a few Nettle-tree butterflies (*Libythea celtis*).

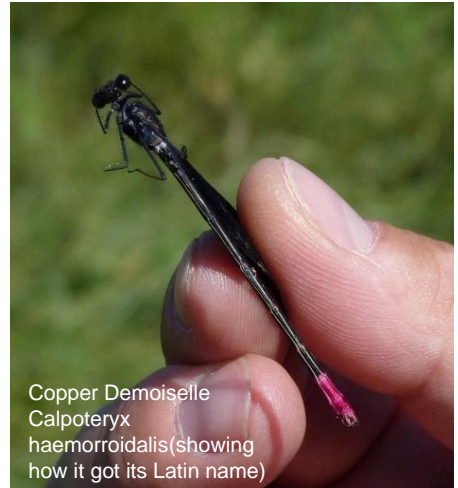
While travelling on to our third hotel on the outskirts of the capital Cagliari, we visited one of the best-preserved Nuraghi, of which there are about 7,000

scattered all over Sardinia. Nuraghi are Megalithic stone structures whose purpose is unclear though they may have been dwellings, temples, military strongholds or a combination of all these. This was the only day it rained, which may have contributed to our failure to see Green Hooktail (*Paragomphus genei*) at one of its few sites on Sardinia. The rain unfortunately did not deter the mosquitos which were a real nuisance that day. The next day, our last full day, involved a boat trip to San Pietro Island off the South-west corner where we saw few Odonata but did get extended close-up views of a Two-tailed Pasha butterfly (*Charaxes jasius*) feeding on rotten fruit.

On our way to the airport, for the flight home, we made one last stop and were rewarded with numerous sightings of Swallowtail butterflies. In total we saw tenspecies of damselfly and 13 species of dragonfly, rather fewer than expected, but our leaders attributed this to the late spring that Sardinia experienced last year, plus 28 species of Butterfly.

This was my second trip with Naturetrek and both times I have been very impressed with their itinerary, accommodation and leaders.

Martin Roberts



Copper Demoiselle
Calopteryx
haemorrhoidalis (showing
how it got its Latin name)

BOLTBY RESERVOIR

Boltby Reservoir, nestled in a little valley in the Hambleton Hills near Thirsk, supplied water to the local area between 1880 and 2003. In 2005 a serious flood event damaged the spillway and the owners, Yorkshire Water, decided to decommission it. In late 2006 work started to lower the water level significantly by creating a notch in the dam wall. The work was completed in late February 2007. In addition a footpath around the reservoir was constructed and the now exposed banks of the reservoir were seeded with a wildflower mix.



I started to record the dragonflies from 2009 and to date have recorded 14 species including Black Darter and Common Hawker. In 2017 I noticed that young trees, noticeably Larch, and Gorse were starting to take over the wildflower banks, creating shade which would be to the detriment of, not only the dragonfly population, but also the flora and other fauna that had developed on the banks. The banks have a notable population of Dingy Skipper butterfly

Initial contact with Yorkshire Water revealed that there was no management plan for the reservoir and that it was to be left 'to go back to nature'. After a little



persuading it was agreed with Yorkshire Water that some conservation work could be carried out by a group of volunteers headed up by Freshwater Habitats Trust, Butterfly Conservation Yorkshire and Yorkshire Dragonfly Group.

Work started successfully on a rather damp day in December 2018 but no further work took place that

winter as the following organised date had to be cancelled due to the weather.

We resumed work in November 2019, with a further workday on 1st February 2020. By the end of the February workday we had cleared our target area of the western bank and dam sides and had started to tackle the eastern bank.

It is hoped that in the not too distant future YW will implement a management plan for the reservoir assuring the long-term future of its biodiversity.



A big thank you must go to FHT, BCY and YW for supporting the project and of course all the volunteers who turned out and got stuck in!

Keith Gittens

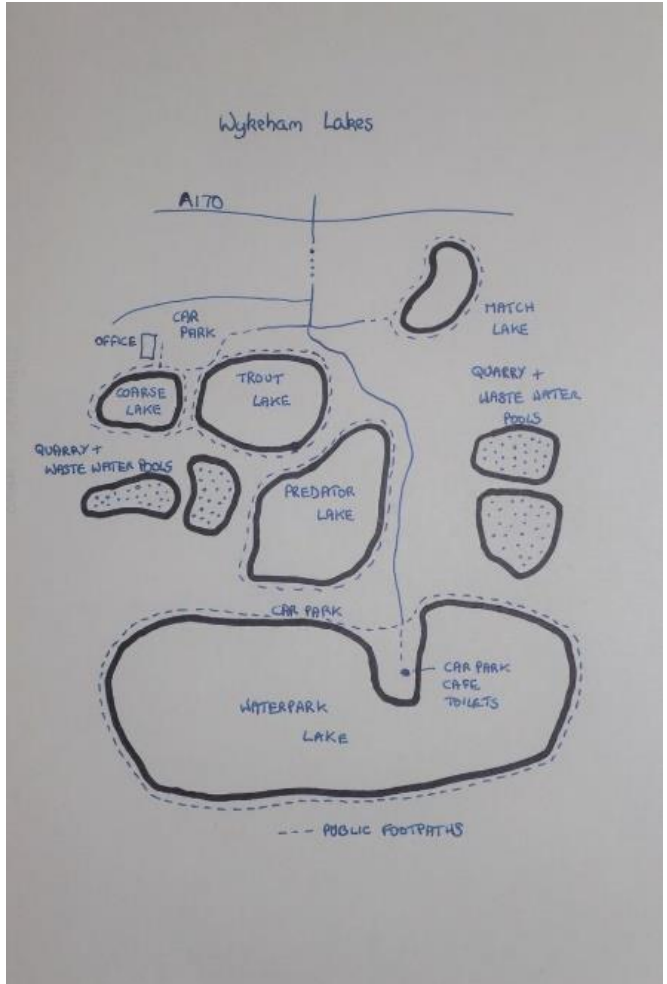
Volunteers Needed

YDG are increasingly asked to attend wildlife events, to set up a stall to promote Dragonflies and their conservation. If you enjoy talking to people, are passionate about Dragonflies and would like to help out, please contact me on keith.gittens@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk

WYKEHAM LAKES

Thousands of years ago this site was submerged beneath Lake Pickering, which had formed from the meltwaters of retreating glaciers during the last ice age.

The ancient lake has long since gone but ongoing quarrying for sand and gravel, that was dumped by the meltwaters, has helped to re-establish several smaller lakes, collectively known as Wykeham Lakes. Until recently, the site owners developed the lakes exclusively for fishing and water sports (North Yorkshire Waterpark) but the area is now accessible to the general public. Quarrying continues outside the perimeter boundary where there is no public access.



To encourage the public to enjoy this magnificent environment for themselves, a circular path/cycle track has been constructed around Waterpark Lake and a café and toilets installed for use in summer. Improvements have also been made to the three main car parks and pathways around the other lakes and woodland. The site Manager and Bailiff (Kevin Sykes) and his staff are keen to encourage us to the site to explore and record its rich biodiversity. Not just the dragonflies of course, but all of the other wildlife too, especially butterflies, moths and birds, Ospreys are regular visitors in April/May and the winter wildfowl on Waterpark Lake often includes rarities. The Coarse Lake had an excellent display of Marsh orchids in early June.

The five lakes surveyed here are broadly similar habitats offering still water with shallow margins featuring reedbeds, lily pads, some blanket weed and other algae, and several other, so far unidentified, freshwater plants. Unfortunately, the invasive New Zealand Pygmy weed is also present at some sites and this pernicious weed is a serious cause for concern.

Keith Gittens carried out a brief dragonfly survey here in 2013 and recorded 13 species, although nothing unusual was seen on that occasion. I obtained the owner's permission for a more thorough survey of all five lakes from June-September 2019, averaging two visits per week. On the very first visit (June 4th) Red-eyed Damselflies were found on the lily pads at the southern end of Predator Lake, a first for the Scarborough area. Subsequently large numbers of this damselfly were also found on Coarse Lake, and smaller numbers on Match Lake and Trout Lake. The abundance of lily pads must be a key factor in the establishment of this species here as this is obviously their preferred habitat.



Over the next few weeks most of the common species were recorded in high numbers. On 18th June, the first Black-tailed Skimmers were found beside Trout Lake and also on the path around Waterpark Lake, but no more than a few were found all summer.

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On July 5th I experienced my first mass emergence: literally dozens of shiny-winged Common Darters escaping from the reed bed at the southern end of Match Lake as I walked close by, a brief but unforgettable sight. A few weeks later, Match Lake sprang another surprise with the discovery of around 40



Small Red-eyed Damselflies, mostly on patches of blanket weed. Only a few years ago this species was rare in the Scarborough area but can now be found in abundance at several local sites. Interestingly, they remained confined to Match Lake and were not seen anywhere else, possibly due to the lack of floating algae elsewhere.

A single Banded Demoiselle showed up on Predator Lake, the only time that one was found. Likewise, only a few Emerald Damselflies were recorded. In contrast, throughout the summer, Emperors, Brown Hawkers, and Four-spotted Chasers were all very common.

The final tally was 16 species (list below), but I'm hopeful of notching up 20 or more this year. Surely a Broad-bodied Chaser will be lurking on one of the lakes! Keith also thinks he glimpsed a Hairy Dragonfly. Perhaps even a stray Common Hawker or Black Darter, or even one of the rarer migrants might turn up this year.

With plenty of Willow trees about, and the first Yorkshire sightings last year of Willow Emeralds, Keith, June and I did spend some time at the end of the summer looking for them without success. Just like the two red-eyed species they are also on a northward march, so fingers crossed for this year. Roll on the new season!

Species List for Wykeham Lake 2019

True Dragonflies	
Black-tailed Skimmer <i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Trout and Waterpark Lakes, June-July, very few
Brown Hawker <i>Aeshna grandis</i>	all 5 lakes, July-Oct, common
Common Darter <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	all 5 lakes June-Sept, common
Emperor Dragonfly <i>Anax imperator</i>	all 5 lakes, June-Aug, common
Four-spotted Chaser <i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	all 5 lakes, May-Aug, common
Migrant Hawker <i>Aeshna mixta</i>	all 5 lakes, August-Oct, common
Ruddy Darter <i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	all 5 lakes, June-Aug, common
Southern Hawker <i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	all 5 lakes, July-Oct, fairly common

Damselflies	
Azure Damselfly <i>Coenagrion puella</i>	all 5 lakes, May-Aug, abundant
Blue-tailed Damselfly <i>Ischnura elegans</i>	all 5 lakes, May-Sept, abundant
Common Blue Damselfly <i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	all 5 lakes June-Sept, common
Emerald Damselfly <i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Predator Lake, June, only 2 found
Red-eyed Damselfly <i>Erythromma najas</i>	Match, Coarse, Predator and Trout Lake, June-Aug, common
Small Red-eyed Damselfly <i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Match Lake only, late July-Aug, peaked at 40
Banded Demoiselle <i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Predator Lake, June, 1 only

Chris Bull

DUTCH DRAGONS

The Netherlands, just an overnight ferry ride from Hull away, holds some 71 species of Odonata. Much of the land is low lying fenland and to the north-east of the country is a national park, the Weerriben Wieden, which typifies such habitat. Historically used for peat cutting, the area is a patchwork of fen, lakes, ditches and woodland. June and I have visited the area twice, firstly in early August 2017 and again in early June 2019.

One of the richest and most accessible areas of the park is Woldlakebos, here some 50 plus species have been recorded. A visit in late May/early June is the



best time to see two species of Whiteface Darter that have undergone a population explosion in the Netherlands in recent years, Lilypad Whiteface (*Leucorrhinia caudalis*) and Yellow-spotted Whiteface

(*Leucorrhinia pectoralis*). At this time of year you will also find Norfolk Hawker (*Aeshna isosceles*), Scarce Chaser (*Libellula fulva*), Downy Emerald (*Cordulia aenea*) and Variable Damselfly (*Coenagrion pulchellum*).

Our later visit in August gave us chance to catch up with Green Hawker (*Aeshna viridis*), which likes Water Soldier on to which to egg lay, and this is plentiful in the ditches.





Spotted Darter

We were also able to find Yellow-spotted Emerald (*Somatochlora flavomaculata*), Spotted Darter (*Sympetrum depressiusculum*), Moustached Darter (*Sympetrum vulgatum*) and Scarlet Darter (*Crocothemis erythraea*).

Over the two visits, sorties out to other sites nearby, which included areas of lowland heath, added Ruby Whiteface

Darter (*Leucorrhinia rubicunda*), Banded Darter (*Sympetrum pedemontanum*) and Irish Damselfly (*Coenagrion lunulatum*). Both Common Winter Damselfly (*Sympecma fusca*) and Siberian Winter Damselfly (*Sympecma paedisca*) are possible although we only found the former.

For anyone wanting to venture into Northern Europe's dragonfly fauna, the Netherlands is an excellent place to start and if you like cycling you can do much of it by bike due to the excellent network of cycle routes.



Banded Darter



Irish Damselfly

Keith Gittens

DRAGONFLY WATCHING IN FILEY BIRD OBSERVATORY

Filey Bird Observatory has a wide diversity of freshwater wetlands from large ephemeral wader scrapes, to small field ponds. A history of conservation work within the Observatory and subsequent pond creation has resulted in a diverse odonata assemblage. I have studied these species within the observatory for over ten years and have also held the recorder role during this time. Over this relatively short time period, species diversity has increased, as has enthusiasm for these fascinating species.

A total of 24 species have been recorded from the bird observatory with a diverse mixture of resident breeders, migrant breeders and vagrants. The geographical position of Filey increases the number of species which would be expected to be found at a typical site of similar latitude. The coastal location ultimately increases the chance of vagrant species both as coastal migrants making first land fall and as dispersing inland species unwilling to cross the sea, backing up against the coastal fringe. The nearby River Hertford and North York Moors add further specialised wandering species of lotic water and soft water habitats, which would otherwise be unlikely to be recorded within Filey.



Breeding habitats within the recording area comprise a mixture of well vegetated ponds, ditches and relatively unvegetated wader scrapes, creating a diversity of aquatic conditions suitable for breeding and larval development. Black-tailed Skimmer and Common Blue Damselfly are particularly abundant on the larger more open scrapes, with Red-veined Darter, breeding in good numbers in similar habitat during good migration years. Well vegetated ponds are characterised by Broad-bodied Chaser, Emperor Dragonfly, Southern Hawker, Common Darter, Ruddy Darter, Blue-tailed Damselfly and Azure Damselfly. Brown Hawker and Migrant Hawker have both been recorded breeding, with the former still scarce within the recording area.

The past five years have seen the colonisation of both breeding Large Red Damselfly and Small Red-eyed Damselfly. The former being a curious late addition to the local community, given its relative abundance locally outside of the observatory, the latter continuing its relentless northward range expansion.

The close proximity of the North York Moors sees regular records of both Common Hawker and Black Darter in late

summer wandering into the Observatory, both species abundant on the soft water bodies of the national park and are about annual in Filey. Likewise, the nearby River Hertford and its tributaries in the Vale of Pickering is unusual nationally in supporting both Beautiful and Banded Demoiselles on the same sections of catchment, with both occasionally recorded in Filey. Similarly, Hairy Dragonfly, likely wandering from the East Yorkshire populations, was recorded for the first time in 2019. Sought-after migrants from south/south-east Europe recorded include Vagrant Emperor, Yellow-winged Darter and Red-veined Darter.



Emerald Damselfly



Four-spotted Chaser

Dragonflies can be observed throughout the Bird Observatory, with notable sites including YWT Filey Dams, Reighton Caravan Site Ponds, Carr Naze (Filey Brigg) Ponds, Filey Old Tip and East Lea. Particularly on hot summer days, after recent southerly or easterly winds, there is a good opportunity of a special find.

Daniel Lombard

2019 FIELD TRIP REPORTS

SHEFFIELD AND TINSLEY CANAL - 16 July

The July meetings in Sheffield were set up primarily to look for records of the Small Red-eyed Damselfly. The species is a newcomer to the Sheffield area, and had been spotted in previous years at Treeton, but has yet to be spotted on the Sheffield & Tinsley canal. The hypothesis is that Small Red-eyed Damselfly might follow the same entry route into the area as its larger cousin, the Red-eyed Damselfly.

Both recording days were ideal weather for Odonata, and most of the expected species were spotted, including lots of Emperor, Brown Hawker and Black-tailed Skimmers. Sadly, we may have been one week too early for the Small Red-eyed Damselfly, as this proved to be illusive at both sites, but it was spotted one week later at Treeton. With this in mind, there will be further trips to Treeton in 2020.

TREETON DYKE - 23rd July

At Treeton, we were treated to a close-up view of the Red-eyed Damselfly (photographed), which is generally very difficult to net, owing to its apparent preference of open water, rather than the water's edge. Thanks to Derek Whiteley for making the catch. Arguably, the stars of the day on the Canal were Red-eared, rather than Red-eyed; a group of Terrapins, basking in the sun.



Alistair McLean

TRANMIRE BOG AND CROPTON FOREST PONDS - 28th July

It was a somewhat gloomy day for this joint meeting with Cleveland Naturalists, as a result insect activity was low. Starting at Tranmire Bog our first search produced glimpses of a Golden-ringed Dragonfly.

We moved on to the ponds where some diligent searching produced a few



Damselflies but again Golden-ringed Dragonfly proved the main attraction with an ovipositing female and patrolling male. A further search along a forest track found another ovipositing Golden-ringed. This individual moved up and down the track side ditch for quite some time, ovipositing at intervals and giving plenty of opportunity to take photos. It proved that even on a dull and misty day it can be worth getting out there!

Keith Gittens

Freshwater Habitats Trust teamed up with the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group again this summer to run Dragonfly Walks on two of Yorkshire's finest Flagship Pond sites, Strensall and Skipwith NNR.

STRENSALL MILITARY TRAINING AREA AND WORLD'S END – 13th July

Leader Keith Gittens with June Gittens & Anne Carter

We had a really good turn out with 11 people joining us. The day started with slightly dull weather but it was still quite warm and at our first port of call, the most accessible pond on the site close to the car park off Lord's Moor Lane, an abundance of damselflies greeted us, including Large Red, Azure, Emerald and Blue-tailed Damselflies. We also had a really good showing of Ruddy Darters. Searching the undergrowth proved fruitful with several exuviae, the empty exoskeletons left after the dragonfly has emerged, found clinging to vegetation around ponds. Keith and Anne also introduced the new Freshwater Habitats Trust booklet 'The Dragonflies of Strensall and Foxglove Covert' to the group, a legacy of the Heritage Lottery Funded Flagship Ponds project. It proved to be a big hit with the group and enabled them to quickly get to grips with dragonfly and damselfly identification.

Moving on, the group headed on from the Military Training Area to World's End, one of the best areas for Dragonfly spotting on the common. Over the last three winters Freshwater Habitats Trust have teamed up with members of the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group and the Yorkshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation to carry out scrub clearance for the benefit of dragonflies and butterflies. It was fantastic to be able to showcase the achievements of the volunteer group and to get first class views of our flying friends skimming around the ponds. As well as an array of damselflies flitting around the emergent vegetation we were treated to an aerial display of Dragons including Emperors, Four-Spotted Chasers, Black-tailed Skimmers, Brown Hawkers, Common, Ruddy and Black Darters. We also managed to get viewings of the Red-eyed Damselfly, a recent coloniser at Strensall, holding territory on the floating pondweed. We managed to catch several species and with Keith's expertise in dragonfly handling, everyone got a close look at these fabulous insects.

In total we saw 13 dragonfly and damselfly species on the walk.

SKIPWITH NNR - 4th August

Leader Keith Gittens with June Gittens & Anne Carter

Another warm and sunny day with a fantastic turnout of 26 folk including several dragonfly experts from the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group.

This year, there was plenty water in the ponds, and the group managed to see 14 species in total. As it was so warm and sunny, netting was tricky but we managed to catch a few insects for close up views. However, as the day progressed quite a few species including Migrant Hawker and Common Hawker where found obligingly hanging out in the gorse bushes, providing great photo opportunities! The day finished with a really good display, by one of our most inquisitive and colourful species, the Southern Hawker.

Anne Carter

Yorkshire Dragonfly Group On-line

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

To download the latest edition of Skimmer please contact Martin Roberts for password. Previous issues are also available.



www.facebook.com/groups/yorkshiredragonflies/



@BDS Yorkshire



www.flickr.com/groups/yorkshiredragonflies.com

www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk/?feed=rss2

EVENTS 2020

For all outings:

Under 18s are welcome with an accompanying adult, and with the agreement of the event leader.

For all outings please bring lunch, binoculars and wear appropriate clothing.

Non-members are welcome – fee £2 per visit.

Saturday 11th July – 10am

Strensall Common / Worlds End

Joint meeting with Freshwater Habitats Trust, to explore the numerous ponds of the Strensall Military Training Area and Worlds End SSSI. To date 19 species of Odonata have been recorded. Distance 3 - 4 miles.

Meet at Galtres Road Car Park, SE648611

Leaders - Keith Gittens, Anne Carter

Contact - vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk, 07903 449509

Sunday 19th July - 1pm to 3pm

Foxglove Covert LNR, Catterick Garrison. Access via Cambrai Lines. Sat-Nav Postcode: DL9 3PZ

An opportunity to learn more about Dragonflies at this fantastic nature reserve. As access to the nature reserve is through the garrison, photo ID will be required.

Leader - Keith Gittens

Contact - vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk, 07903 449509

Sunday 26th July – 10am

Wykeham Lakes

A joint meeting with Ryedale Natural History Society and Scarborough Field Naturalists.

We will explore the fishing lakes and waterpark where up to now 16 species have been recorded including both species of Red-eyed Damselfly.

Leader – Keith Gittens

Meet at SE987823. This is at the south end of the fishing lakes.

Contact - vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk, 07903 449509

Sunday 26th July - 10am to approx. 1pm

Site Oakhill and Goole brick ponds

Booking required at eastridingcoastandcountryside.co.uk/what's-on 01482 39532

Should be 15 or so species flying. Common Hawker and Black Darter target species

Leader - Peter Hinks

Meet at car park Grid ref SE726231, signposted off Tom Pudding Way (A161), just past Tesco Distribution. Near M62 junction 36.

Contact - Peter Hinks - Tel 0753 4104564 .

Thursday 30th July - 11am

Treeton Dyke

Leader - Alistair McLean

Meet where the footpath meets Falconer Way (SK43828608)

Contact - alistair.mclean@museums-sheffield.org.uk

Sunday 2nd August – 10am

Skipwith Common NNR

Joint meeting with Freshwater Habitats Trust to explore the numerous ponds of this heathland nature reserve.

Leaders - Keith Gittens, Anne Carter

Meet at the reserve car park at SE669377

Contact - vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk, 07903 449509

Sunday 9th August – 10am

Boltby Reservoir and Forest Ponds

Joint meeting with Cleveland Field Naturalists. Following recent conservation work at the reservoir an opportunity to see how the site and the dragonfly fauna are developing.

Leaders - Keith Gittens, Bill Hall

Meet at the start of the forest drive, SE502871.

Contact - vc62@yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk, 07903 449509

Thursday 20th August – 11am

Dearne

Leader - Alistair McLean

Meet at footpath at end of Vicar Road, Darfield (SE4179303984)

Contact - alistair.mclean@museums-sheffield.org.uk

SPECIES LIST FOR YORKSHIRE

Breeding Species		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Status in Yorkshire
<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Beautiful Demoiselle	Restricted Range
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Banded Demoiselle	Widespread
<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Emerald Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Pyrhosoma nymphula</i>	Large Red Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Erythromma najas</i>	Red-eyed Damselfly	Restricted Range
<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Small Red-eyed Damselfly	Restricted Range
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Azure Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Common Blue Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Blue-tailed Damselfly	Widespread
<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>	Variable Damselfly	Restricted Range
<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	Common Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Migrant Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Southern Hawker	Widespread
<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	Brown Hawker	Widespread
<i>Anax imperator</i>	Emperor Dragonfly	Widespread
<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	Hairy Dragonfly	Restricted Range
<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Golden-ringed Dragonfly	Restricted Range
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Chaser	Widespread
<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Broad-bodied Chaser	Widespread
<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Black-tailed Skimmer	Widespread
<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	Keeled Skimmer	Restricted Range
<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Common Darter	Widespread
<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Red-veined Darter	Migrant – Occasional Breeder
<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	Ruddy Darter	Widespread
<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	Black Darter	Widespread

Migrants, Vagrants and Ex-residents	
<i>Lestes dryas</i> - Scarce Emerald Damselfly (EX)	<i>Chalcolestes viridis</i> – Willow Emerald Damselfly (M)
<i>Ceriagrion tenellum</i> - Small Red Damselfly (V)	<i>Aeshna isosceles</i> - Norfolk Hawker (V)
<i>Aeshna affinis</i> - Southern Migrant Hawker (V)	<i>Anax parthenope</i> - Lesser Emperor (M)
<i>Hemianax ephippiger</i> - Vagrant Emperor (V)	<i>Cordulia aenea</i> - Downy Emerald (V)
<i>Libellula fulva</i> - Scarce Chaser (EX)	<i>Sympetrum vulgatum</i> - Vagrant Darter (V)
<i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i> - Yellow-winged Darter (M)	<i>Leucorrhinia dubia</i> - White-faced Darter (EX)