

# Darter

## Magazine

With only two flight seasons left to collect records for the National Dragonfly Atlas, this edition of Darter has been put together to help you decide where to look for dragonflies this season. The Vice County reports will point you towards the under recorded areas in each Vice County, if in doubt contact the Vice County Recorder (contact details on the back cover) and they will let you know which areas to visit or where you can go to look for a particular species. The Garden Birdwatch and iSpot surveys should generate records from gardens and urban areas – read more in Mike Toms' (p.4) and Martin Harvey's (p.22) articles.

If you are considering a trip square bashing in an under recorded area, John and Viv Phillips' account of their trip to Scotland should convince you arrange one soon! There are also updates on the atlas, recording and monitoring as well as a summary of the migrants in 2010 – happy reading (and more importantly, happy dragonflying)!

## Claire

**Claire Install**, Editor

[claire.install@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:claire.install@naturalengland.org.uk)

T: 0300 060 2338; M: 07792 231 925

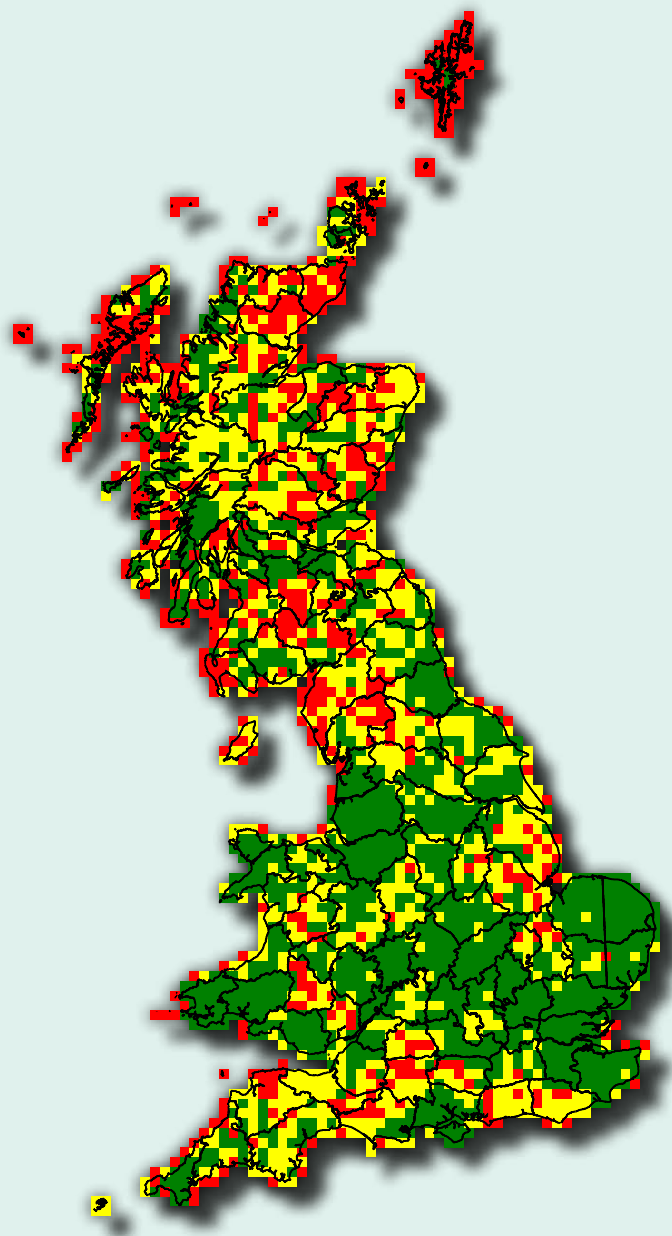


Southern Migrant Hawker, Hadleigh Country Park, July 2010.  
Roy Woodward.

## Overall National Atlas progress up to the start of 2011

The green squares show 10km squares which exceed the regional diversity threshold, yellow squares are below the threshold. Red squares show areas that are either unrecorded or have records that date before 2000.

Read more on page 3.



# National Dragonfly Atlas Progress

Steve Cham

Work on the new Dragonfly atlas continues rapidly. The new atlas will provide the latest snapshot in time of changes and trends in distribution of native, migrant and alien species. Never has this been so important as now, particularly where changes maybe a result of climate change.

Records continue to be submitted and consolidated into the DRN dataset. Sample maps have been produced based on the latest data which provides a quick and easy way to see where the gaps exist and where to focus recording activities in the remaining two recording seasons. This has also highlighted errors in the data, resulting from incorrect grid references. When plotted on a map some of the dots are appearing in the sea!! It is important that all recorders and VC recorders double check the details of records before sending them in. Most of the errors are due to the prefix for the 100km square being incorrect.

For the accuracy of the new Atlas please ensure that all outstanding records are submitted especially new records gathered from km squares which have an absence of data. Please continue to send in records even of the commonest of species.

At the Members' Day at Harper Adams University College, in October a series of different map styles were shown to members with the request for frank and open feedback. This is an essential stage to ensure that maps are legible to readers particularly for those with colour blindness. The feedback sessions stimulated interesting discussions and debate. Based on the plentiful comments received, several map styles were clearly preferred and others clearly disliked by the majority. One has been proposed and is favoured for the final publication.

The page layouts have been started and several page mock-ups have been produced. So far the feedback has been encouraging and a few minor tweaks have helped to improve the appearance. We are currently aiming for a 400 page book with 4 pages allocated to each resident breeding species. There will also be significant sections on habitats as well as analysis of the distribution trends. With a number of new species being recorded in recent years along with range expansion of resident species there is a good story to tell.

It is planned to have some page mock-ups available for viewing at the forthcoming Recorders' Day.

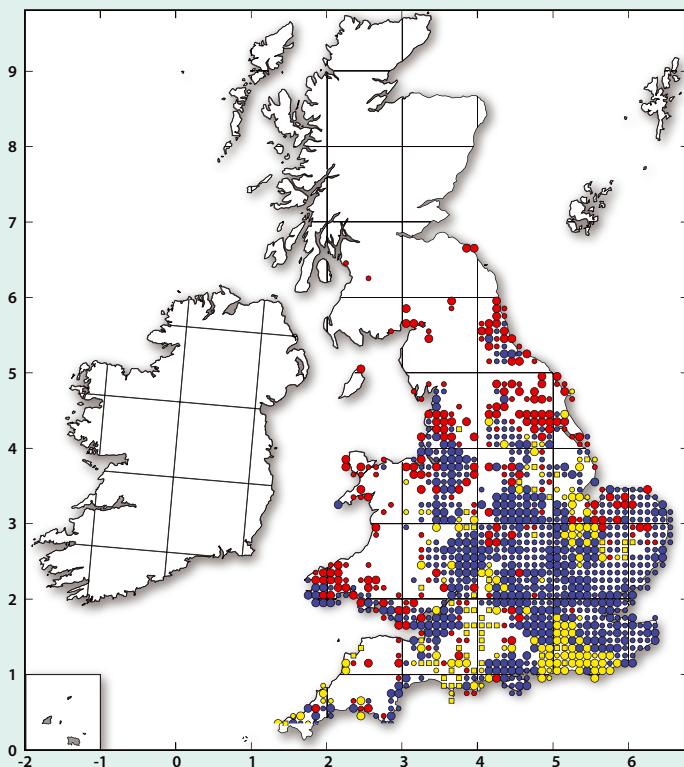


Figure 1. Mock up atlas map showing the current distribution of Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta* from the DRN database.

## Map Key:

- Records < 1990 (Old atlas)
- Records > 1990 & < 2000 Single records or present
- Records > 1990 & < 2000 Count > 1
- Records > 1990 & > 2000 Single records or present
- Records > 1990 & > 2000 Count > 1
- Records > 2000 only Single records only or present
- Records > 2000 only Count > 1



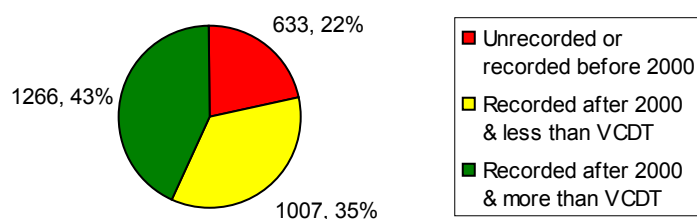
# Atlas Recording Progress

Steve Prentice

I wrote last year about the uncertain weather we had for the second season recording for the new national Atlas. I can echo that for the third season, but despite the weather can happily state that records are flowing in with many more expected. As we have only two more recording seasons before we publish the atlas we need to focus on those unrecorded areas. The map on the front cover shows three categories of 10km squares as traffic light colours. Red denotes squares which were recorded before 2000 or not recorded at all, these are the areas we need to prioritise for recording. Yellow squares have been recorded since 2000 but the number of species observed has not met the Vice County Diversity Threshold (VCDT). The VCDT is the minimum number of species we would expect for each part of the country. We need further visits to these squares to find those last few species. Green squares have been recorded since 2000 and the number of species observed exceeds the VCDT. Just to avoid any confusion, the five year atlas project started in 2008 but records from 2000 will be used to produce the atlas and enable easy comparisons with the last atlas, which although published in 1996 used mainly records collected up to 1990.

	Number of 10km squares	Unrecorded or recorded before 2000	Recorded after 2000 & less than VCDT	Recorded after 2000 & more than VCDT
England	1,499	177	510	812
Scotland	1,119	424	415	280
Wales	288	32	82	174
Total	2906	633	1007	1266

Dragonfly atlas recording progress  
January 2011



The table and graph show how recording is progressing in each part of the country. As the map on the front cover illustrates recording is progressing really well in Wales with England not far behind. I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all those recorders involved for their time and effort. It looks like we are on target but we will need extra effort to target those unrecorded squares so would encourage all recorders to take a holiday in Scotland and help fill in a few squares.

## Migrant and Dispersive Dragonflies in Britain during 2010

Adrian Parr

Last year saw some very major developments relating to migrant dragonflies in Britain. The key events are summarised below. These may affect what fieldwork many recorders, particularly those in southeast England, may want to carry out this year.

**Southern Emerald Damselfly:** Individuals were seen at a record-breaking five sites (in Norfolk, Essex and Kent) during the year, with both males and females present together at two sites in Kent – at one of which oviposition definitely took place. Will successful breeding have occurred and were any other sites overlooked?

**Willow Emerald Damselfly:** The strongholds of this new colonist species remain in southeast Suffolk and the surrounding area, but towards the end of the 2010 season more distant sites were discovered in south Essex and north Kent, perhaps as a result of fresh immigration. Look up in the trees during late summer for this species.

**Dainty Damselfly:** The remarkable discovery of what appears to be a breeding population in north Kent follows on closely from the re-discovery of the species on Jersey. Peak time to look for the species would be late May–late July.

**Southern Migrant Hawker:** During 2010 this previously very rare migrant was seen in at least eight localities – mostly in coastal Essex, where individuals favoured well-vegetated ditches in grazing marsh often also home to Scarce Emerald Damselfly. Oviposition was noted at two sites, one in south Essex and one in north Kent. Given the one year lifecycle, it will be important to look for emergences of locally-bred individuals this coming summer. The species now breeds fairly routinely in The Netherlands.





# Birdwatchers on the Look Out for Dragonflies




Mike Toms

Gardens are an important but sometimes overlooked habitat. Collectively, UK gardens occupy an area greater in extent than the county of Suffolk and are the main contributors to urban biodiversity. While the small size of most individual gardens, coupled with their management for leisure rather than for wildlife, might suggest that they have little biodiversity value, it is worth noting that gardens support important populations of many different species (from birds and reptiles to beetles and bugs). It is also worth noting that more mobile species, like dragonflies, may visit even those gardens located within the most urbanised landscapes, making use of the resources they contain.

With a large proportion of the human population now living within urbanised landscapes, isolated from the wider countryside, gardens additionally provide an important opportunity for people to engage with nature. Large and attractive species, like dragonflies, are one of the more visible components of the garden fauna and it should be possible to engage householders with these stunning insects.

The way in which species use our gardens, and the size of the populations visiting them, is something that we know little about. Most of our monitoring efforts are targeted towards wider countryside habitats, like farmland and woodland, and this means that we lack a complete understanding of how species respond to the process of urbanisation and the loss of more 'natural' habitats. Monitoring urban wildlife can be difficult and this is particularly true for gardens which are, after all, in private ownership and not open to those participating in the standard surveys. One way around this is to engage householders in the recording and to ask them to monitor the wildlife using their gardens through a 'Citizen Science' approach. This is



GBW Data Home > Weekly count entry
 user: MIKE TOMS

Page 1 of 2

## Species count form

This page deals with all aspects of a weeks' bird-watching in your garden. Please select a valid Sunday from the calendar below, then add species from the various groups using the different tabs. Don't forget to record any food provided. **NEW!** You can now arrange the species on the tabs either alphabetically or by taxonomic order by setting up your preference in MY DETAILS (on Data Home Page).

Start date of counts (Sunday to Saturday)

Please click on the calendar dates (start of week) to automatically select that week for submission (hovering over each date provides more info).

2010							2011											
J	A	S	O	N	D		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
27	1	3	5	7	9	11	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23
4	6	8	10	12	14	16	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
11	13	15	17	19	21	23	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	3
18	20	22	24	26	28	30	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	31	2	4	6	8
25	27	29	31				25	27	29	31								

### Species groups

Please select the tab for the species groups you wish to record. Note that all species will be submitted at the same time, so make sure you don't submit the page until you have visited all the necessary tabs! Counts missing? Click here to refresh! Get help with identification with our PDFs: Bumblebees (645kb PDF), Reptiles and Amphibians (477kb).

Please add counts for all the species of dragonfly you saw.

Species	Present	Count	Species	Present	Count	Species	Present	Count
Azure Damselfly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Large Red Damselfly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Common Blue Damselfly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Southern Hawker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Common Darter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Migrant Hawker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Emperor Dragonfly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Broad-bodied Chaser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Four-spotted Chaser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Ruddy Darter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	Brown Hawker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please add counts for any rarer dragonflies you saw (start typing the species into the species field then select from the list). Enter a count value or leave blank to signal that the species was present but you don't know how many individuals were involved.

Species	Count
Bar	<input type="text"/>
Banded Damselfly	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

### Weekly comment (optional)

Please use this space to enter any comments you have about this week's observations. Note that there is a limit of 800 characters.

800 characters left

Garden BirdWatch | BTO Home  
 Garden BirdWatch online is organised by the BTO.  
 Email: [gbw@bto.org](mailto:gbw@bto.org)

Terms and Conditions | Privacy Statement | © British Trust for Ornithology  
 BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, UK. Registered Charity Number 216652.

## The Species Count Form for Dragonflies.

something that the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has been doing through its weekly Garden BirdWatch (GBW). GBW participants have been submitting weekly records of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and bumblebees over many years, enabling researchers at the BTO to monitor changes in garden use over time and to develop

our understanding of the role that gardens play at wider spatial scales.

Following discussions with BDS, the BTO Garden BirdWatch Team has agreed to add dragonflies to the list of groups they monitor. A dozen dragonfly species, selected following a poll of BDS members at a recent conference, form the backbone of

the recording, while a suite of less-common garden visiting species are also available for the 14,000 or so GBW recorders to monitor. Recorders submit records either online (see image) or on special paper forms, and it is likely that many tens of thousands of records will be collected annually. The systematic weekly nature of the recording should allow researchers to look at distribution, numbers, flight periods and the influence of local habitats,

something that they already do for other species groups.

These data will be made available to County Dragonfly Recorders and the BTO is just about to start a three-year programme of work that will, ultimately, allow County Dragonfly Recorders to log into the BTO database to validate and download records for their region (if they want to that is). More information on how this will work is available from Mike

Toms (mike.toms@bto.org), the BTO's Head of Garden Ecology. GBW is funded by its participants and a free enquiry pack is available from GBW Dragonflies, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU; phone 01842-750050 or email [gbw@bto.org](mailto:gbw@bto.org). You'll also find more information on the web ([www.bto.org/gbw](http://www.bto.org/gbw)) and some idea of what can be done with GBW records can be found on our results pages.

## Most Northerly UK Population of the Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*

Juliette Dinning



The flight pond at Castle Fraser. Juliette Dinning

I have been surveying the flight pond at NTS Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire since 2008, having found there a strong population of Northern Damselfly *C. hastulatum* that year in May. I later volunteered to take part in the British Dragonfly Survey Pilot Study in 2009, conducting regular fortnightly surveys along the one accessible length at the north side of the pond. This is no ordinary pond: as well as having the most easterly population of Northern Damselfly in the UK, finding Azure Damselfly here provides the most northerly record of the species in the UK. In

addition, this is only the second time that Northern Damselflies and Azure Damselflies have been found at the same site in the UK - both species were found together in Pitlochry, Perthshire - the Azure Damselfly population there being very small. Unusually, the pond at Castle Fraser also sustains two species of goldfish - not often a recipe for dragonfly success, especially for a habitat that supports ten odonate species. So monitoring this pond and finding out why it is such a good site for dragonflies is an interesting project to say the least.

I grew up in Cheshire and visited Bagmere Pool near Congleton as a youngster, and this was a great introduction to dragonflies. But my real interest started in Scotland through a passion for landscape photography, and with it, an appreciation for the wildlife inhabiting some of these remote but beautiful areas. Finding Northern Damselfly and subsequently Azure Damselfly at Castle Fraser shows that dragonfly populations are as fluid as the landscapes they inhabit, and as habitats and climates change, so does the potential for dragonflies. Other local sites have yielded more new records for me: Northern Damselfly at a previously unrecorded pool near Braemar, and Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* this year at an established site near Aboyne. The variety of habitats that support dragonflies in North East Scotland is wide - I have found good populations of dragonfly species in water features on golf courses, ornamental ponds in hotel grounds, and areas saturated with water following commercial tree felling, as well as remote bog pools. Although this corner of Scotland is not blessed with the great variety of species to be found in the best parts of England, or even in the warmer climate of Western Scotland, the data collected from recording here is still valuable, and the limited number of species makes it a great place to learn identification without feeling overwhelmed.

The male Azure Damselflies were found during one of my surveys on 31 May 2009. Until this point, the only blue damselflies seen at the pond were Northern Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma*





*cyathigerum* and Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*. Northern Damselfly is the largest population of blue damselfly at the pond, with Common and Blue-tailed Damselflies having roughly equal populations of smaller number. A male Azure Damselfly was spotted as looking different from the rest, and on closer inspection was identified and then photographed. Another two males were subsequently found nearby at the west end of the pond. Throughout 2009 in regular surveys, the numbers of Azure Damselfly proved to be small. At the peak of their flight period, less than ten per survey were counted throughout the length of the pond, some days only one was seen. Every effort was made during surveys to identify every blue damselfly seen. Recording during 2010 proved to be similar to 2009, with ten being a good number of male insects seen during a visit. Very few females have been seen in either year, and these so far have always been of the blue colour-form. No mating or ovipositing behaviour has so far been observed in this species at the site.

My conclusion is that this population is very small indeed – where hundreds of damselflies of other species have been counted during surveys over a season, no more than a couple dozen Azure Damselfly have been counted during the same period. Further monitoring will need to be done to find out whether this very small population of Azure Damselfly at Castle Fraser is secure. The species has been previously found as far north as Angus, having been transported unwittingly in the 1970's by residents from Surrey following a house move where eggs were contained within pond plants; and there are unconfirmed records of Azure Damselfly found in Aberdeen

at Scotstown Moor in 1878 and later in Kincardine – although I can confirm that Scotstown Moor which has changed a great deal since then, no longer appears to support them. I very much hope that the surveying that I am carrying out will give a better picture of dragonfly activity here over the long term, and following on from this, ideas as to how this habitat can best be preserved and managed. This case also shows how important regular recording is – there can be no doubt that this tiny population of Azure Damselfly may have been completely overlooked if it hadn't been for regular and detailed surveying of this site.



Male Azure Damselfly. Trevor Goodfellow.

## Dragonfly Monitoring

Dave Smallshire

Firstly, I must thank everyone who did transect counts for the second year of our Pilot Scheme. Last autumn some exciting ideas emerged about a potentially new, powerful and more user-friendly means of tracking the fortunes of our dragonflies. The BDS was invited to attend a meeting at the offices of Statistics Netherlands in October, to discuss dragonfly monitoring. After hearing about the Dutch experience, we presented summary findings from our pilot scheme and then a French contingent explained how they might go about starting to monitor species with only a very small number of volunteer enthusiasts. About 450 transects have been counted for 12 years in the Netherlands, organised by De Vlinderstichting (the equivalent of Butterfly Conservation). However, their results show that population trends can only be detected after 10-15 years of data gathering, and then only for three-quarters of species. They also had difficulty in maintaining adequate volunteer effort. Transect counting does require a high sampling effort and many volunteers!

After hearing from Arco van Strien (Statistics Netherlands), we concluded that new developments in the field of site-occupancy modelling are a promising alternative. In essence, this uses very robust presence/absence data at sites or grid squares to produce trends in abundance: the proportion of sites or squares surveyed in which each species has been recorded. Variable

Damselfly data from several countries (including Britain) will be analysed to see whether this method could also utilise the data we have already amassed through the Dragonfly Recording Network. For records to be used with this method, all that is needed is a complete list of species present on a given date and for the site to be visited during the flight periods of the species being monitored.

Both our pilot scheme and site-occupancy modelling are tools to produce population indices at a national or perhaps regional scale. However, for specific sites where information on population trends is required (e.g. nature reserves), monitoring based on standardised transect counts is probably still the best option. The BTO is analysing our pilot scheme data and we hope that this will inform the frequency of visits needed, amongst other things. It may be that three carefully-timed visits in optimum weather may suffice – watch this space!

We anticipate asking those of you who have kindly undertaken transect counts already to continue with these (Steve Prentice will make contact in April), and anyone else who wishes to have a go will be most welcome to start a new one (please contact Steve). However, we would also ask everyone to try to record all species seen during any site visit and to submit these, not just the unusual species. If site-occupancy modelling takes off, we'll need records like this ... and we'll have to find a way of recording when a full species list has been submitted!



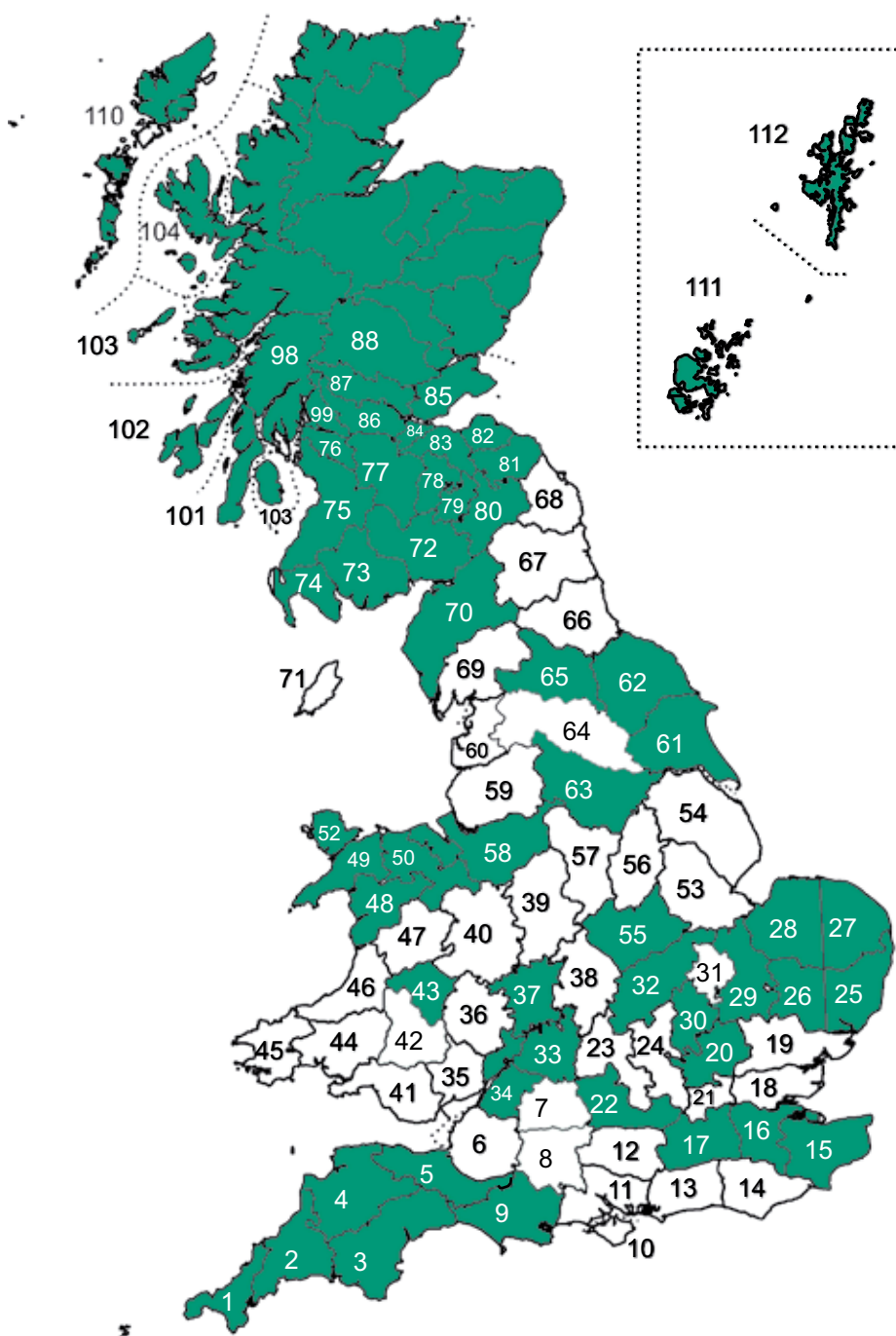


Figure 3. Vice county map. Vice Counties for which 2010 accounts have been written are coloured in green.

## Vice County Reports

### Cornwall – VC 1 & 2

Steve Jones

Still no takers for the role of county recorder here in VC1 & VC2 so here I am lingering in the post for another year!

There have been very few records for the **Small Red Damselfly** *Ceragrion tenellum* on the Lizard peninsula over the last decade and so the recent discovery of the species at a new site along a track at Chybarles just

off Goonhilly Downs by Christine Moore is particularly important given that it might prove to be the source of wanderers that have sporadically occurred. Similarly an invite to talk about dragonflies at a private woodland/wetland charity open weekend in July led to my discovery of a new **Small Red Damselfly** colony on the Penwith peninsula at Tanglewood near Newbridge, Penzance.

Back on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, during Dragonfly Week we had our first local field meeting for 6 years (!) and

over 40 people turned up for a walk around the pools on Goss Moor NNR led by myself & Dave Thomas. The day included a rare visit to Royalton Pool where good access routes have now been provided by Natural England to what proved to be a substantial **Small Red Damselfly** colony. We also had a look at the **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura pumilio* site discovered by Peter Maker along the adjoining A30 dual carriageway the previous year and despite the fact the habitat had almost dried up we still managed to find 5 individuals including a copulating pair.

Perhaps the most startling record of the year came on the 14<sup>th</sup> October when Peter Maker was cycling at Penare Farm, near Gorran, after a mornings birding on Dodman Head and remarkably came across a male **Vagrant Emperor** *Anax ephippiger*, the first record from the county since 1998.

For those of you living in Cornwall or visiting the county during the summer months you may find it useful to check my website [www.cornishnature.co.uk](http://www.cornishnature.co.uk) to see if there are any dragonfly related meetings taking place as these are sometimes organised to late to be listed elsewhere.

### Devon – VC 3 & 4

Dave Smallshire

The good weather in spring and early summer provided plenty of opportunities to get out and see dragonflies, although from July the weather was generally rather disappointing. Although many spring events were some 2-3 weeks late, a **Keeled Skimmer** that emerged at Finlake on 25 May was very early. Some June counts of our key species provided record numbers, such as over 500 **Red-eyed Damselflies** and 85 **Scarce Chasers** along the Grand Western Canal (Ray Jones). The latter species was not seen at Exminster Marshes in 2009, so it was a relief when Lesley Kerry found a teneral with exuvia on 26 May; at least 18 males were on territory there in June over a bigger area than in 2008. RSPB volunteers will be setting up a monitoring transect this







Small Red Damselfly at Penwith Peninsula where a new colony has been discovered. Steve Jones.

year – although we may have to wait until 2012 if the species maintains a biennial emergence. Single **Scarce Chasers** were also found nearby in the Clyst Valley on 27 June and then at West Charleton Marsh, Kingsbridge, on the late date of 23 July (Roger Smith); the latter is 50km SW of Exminster and could represent another significant range expansion.

**Downy Emeralds** appeared at the four main Devon sites, plus a few at Decoy Pond, where mating was observed. Checking some of the **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly** sites in SW Dartmoor, Rich Billington found a new population on Wigford Down. **Small Red-eyed Damselflies** were discovered at Dawlish Warren in August and egg-laying observed. After an early **Lesser Emperor** at Stover Country Park on 9 June, in August one was seen at Aylesbeare Common and at least a pair were at Smallhanger. Surprisingly, though, no Red-veined Darters were reported in the county this year.

Finally, at the time of writing I'm still struggling with getting a backlog of records into our AditSite Darter, which has given us a few hiccups this

winter, so apologies if you can't see your records showing up on the latest atlas coverage maps.

### South Somerset – VC 5

Chris Iles

So far during the Atlas fieldwork, South Somerset has been very under-recorded, which is a shame as the area has some interesting habitats and a number of local species needing monitoring. The vice-county covers part of the Somerset Levels, supporting at the least good numbers of the ubiquitous species, and wet heaths and mires on the Quantocks and Exmoor. On the latter there is an extensive programme of mire restoration taking place at the moment which will surely benefit the area's dragonflies and damselflies.

I have just taken on the role of County Recorder, and would very much appreciate records from BDS members, both those living in the area, and those on holiday or passing through. In particular, records from garden ponds offering proof of breeding – exuviae or emergents – would be appreciated,

as at present we have confirmation of breeding from only one species, Common Darter.

It would also be valuable to track down three species almost certainly still present in the vice-county, but that have not been recorded since 2000. Two – Black Darter and Keeled Skimmer – are most likely to be found on the bogs of Exmoor or perhaps the Quantocks, whilst the third, White-legged Damselfly, has been recorded from the Levels and the adjacent low-lying farmland between Taunton and Yeovil. It certainly still occurs in this habitat just to the north of the vice-county boundary at Baltonsborough.

On the credit side, the Scarce Chaser has expanded into South Somerset as it has to the northern part of the county and to Devon. A record from Dunster in May 2008 represented the first vice-county record, and it has been recorded in both 2008 and 2009 from Curry Moor on the Levels.

### Dorset – VC 9

Andrew Brown

Greetings from Dorset! I have only been the recorder for around 18 months and 2010 was my first full year. As well as being recorder I helped to set up the Dorset Dragonfly Group in 2009. 2010 was again the first full year of group activities including a series of public events, guided walks and illustrated talks.

The group also successfully bid for and won an OPAL grant. This funding will be used to purchase basic equipment such as maps, identification guides & the establishment of a group website. The website is to promote group activities, a guide to Dorset's species and also how people can get involved in recording. It will be interactive, acting as a forum so members can post up comments, sightings, sites and photos.

During 2010 one of the group members developed a fully functional on-line recording system for Dorset which we piloted this year and has proved very successful. So far 14 people submitted records online, a total of over 2000 records! Only 300 records were collected during 2008 &





2009 so online recording has made a huge impact. The ability quickly to analyse the data gathered is one of the most useful aspects of the system. Figure 4 is a map showing in which 10km square the Vice County Diversity Threshold has been reached. The key shows how each square is fairing.

Next year we will be able to monitor progress from week to week. We can all see which species have been recorded in each square and tailor our survey work to fill in the gaps. As can be seen we really need to focus on the north and west of Dorset. The groups aim is to give talks and walks in these hinterlands to see if we can get some more people involved in submitting records. Using the website we can advertise for help to try and fill in the gaps for the BDS Atlas as we only have two seasons to go!

See you in March at the recorders meeting!

## Kent - VC 15 & 16

John & Gill Brook

What an amazing year 2010 has been in the south-east. Kent was

extremely dry and hot during June and July. The highlight of the year was the discovery of the **Dainty Damselfly** *Coenagrion scitulum* on the 21st June while we were out in the field recording for the new British Dragonfly Atlas. I was trying to focus my binoculars on a "blue" damselfly, but every time I had it in focus it moved, so I decided to take a photo of it and check it at home to see if it was a Common Blue, *Enallagma cyathigerum*, or an Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*. Imagine our surprise when, with the help of identification guides, we decided it was the **Dainty damselfly**. The photo was sent to Adrian Parr and Graham Vick of the BDS for confirmation. After the first sighting of a female on the Isle of Sheppey we have seen it at two other sites. At one of the sites it was seen ovipositing in tandem and at the other site some exuviae were collected, two of which were of the **Dainty Damselfly** and confirmed by Graham Vick and Steve Butler (BDS members). More exuviae were found on a follow up visit.

Another exciting find was of a **Southern Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes barbarus* at Cliffe Marshes

by Tim Hanson on the 12th July. The previous time this species was seen in Kent was at a dune slack near Sandwich in 2003 and 2004. On the 17th July we joined the Sussex group who had come to see the **Scarce Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes dryas* at Chalk Marshes and Cliffe Marshes and while at Cliffe, four **Southern Emeralds** were seen as well as great numbers of the **Scarce Emerald**.

A week later on the 25th July, we again went to Cliffe to meet up with Mike Thurner, Don Tagg and Phil Simpson to see the **Southern Emeralds** again. While there we were surprised to see a pair of Aeshnids flying in tandem and ovipositing. These were eventually caught in a net and positively identified as the **Southern Migrant Hawker** *Aeshna affinis* and many photos were taken. The pair were then released beside the dyke and a short while later the female returned and spent a considerable time ovipositing in the mud at the base of the rushes while many more photos were taken.

A few days later we heard that a **Lesser Emperor**, *Anax parthenope*, had been seen at Cliffe Marshes by James Lowen on the 21st July. The Lesser Emperor is seen regularly at Dungeness every year and although ovipositing has been observed, no exuviae have yet been found.

After we came back from a holiday in Switzerland during August, we heard that the **Willow Emerald** *Lestes viridis* had been seen in Kent by Tim Hodge on the 18th August, and various times since by other observers including ourselves. This is the first record of an adult in the county since the finding of an exuvia at Cliffe in 1992.

The latest find was at the garden pond of Andrew Lawson of the orange form of a female **Common Bluetail** *Ischnura senegalensis* which is very similar to the immature female Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly, *Ischnura pumilio*. One of the main differences between the two being the size and shape of the pterostigma. Andrew had bought some pond plants from a nearby nursery this year, so it is most

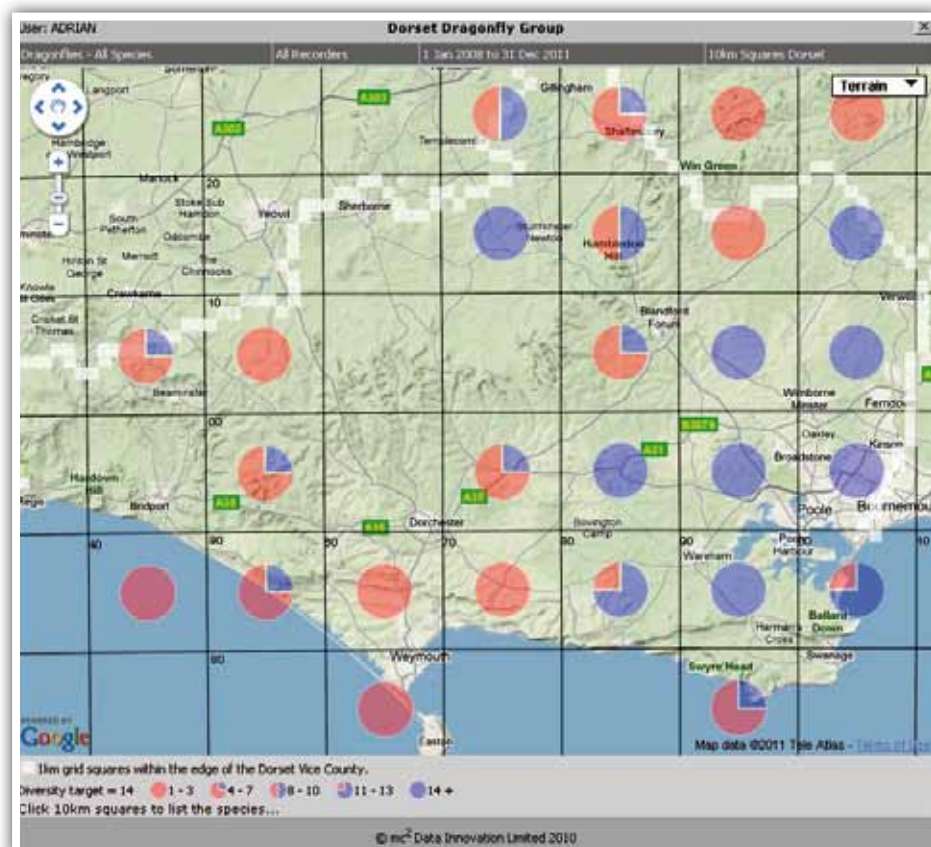


Figure 4. A map showing where the vice county threshold has been reached in Dorset. Andrew Brown.





A Downy Emerald with deformed wings - perhaps a result of the cold winter?  
Nicholas Donnithorne.

likely that the egg or larva had been brought into the country on imported plants. Apparently there have been other similar instances recorded in the country.

Some Kent species seem to be expanding their range. The **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** *Cordulegaster boltonii* was photographed at Birling by Simon Holdsworth and the **White-legged Damselfly** *Platycnemis pennipes* was seen by us at Naccolt Pit, to date the furthest east record in the county.

### Surrey – VC 17

Nicholas Donnithorne

The trickle of Records for Surrey virtually halted this year. Neither I nor Alistair Kirk at the Surrey BRC has received many records at all. The BDS post 2000 list for each 10K square shows there are no records for many squares and quite unbelievably none for the square containing Thursley. I suspect that for the popular sites, most people assume someone else will send records in and it is true that many of the recorders involved in the original Surrey atlas in the 1980's/90's, have either moved away or no longer actively record. So as I said in last year's report, records from anywhere in Surrey are welcomed, even for the common species. I can only cover

a small area on my own and without more records the atlas is going to have a blank space where Surrey should be. To try and interest more people I was to give a presentation at the Surrey County recorders meeting in November 2010, but this meeting has been postponed until March this year.

After the unusually hard winter and poor spring, it was going to be interesting to see what effect this might have had on dragonflies. My three "constant effort sites" in North Sussex are now in their 15<sup>th</sup> recording year and 13<sup>th</sup> full season (April to November) of recording weekly. Emergence was just over a week late, just as the first swallows arrived. What was surprising was that the first records on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May were only of **Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* and **Downy Emerald** *Cordulia aenea* exuviae. Due to the cold damp weather that followed, I was not to see adult dragonflies until the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Although emergence of **Downy Emerald** extended over six weeks, most emergence occurred in a two week period of reasonable warm and sunny weather. Each year a few emerge with badly formed wings, but to find three on 16<sup>th</sup> May was unusual and one has to wonder if the cold and frosty weather in the preceding week was responsible.

The last record was a male **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum* on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

My new constant effort site (for the BDS scheme) is some miles away on the River Medway. The site floods regularly and this winter was no exception. Considering the river can rise a minimum 3 metres above normal, it amazes me that all the dragonfly larvae are not washed away by the vastly increased volume of water. But maybe they were, as numbers of **Banded Demoiselle** *Calopteryx splendens* in particular were greatly reduced when compared to 2009. Numbers of the other main species **White-legged Damselfly** *Platycnemis pennipes* and **Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo* were generally unaffected. Once again, one male **Brilliant Emerald** *Somatochlora metallica* patrolled the river for a week in mid June.

### Hertfordshire – VC 20

Roy Woodward

After a period of intensive fieldwork that culminated in the publication of 'Dragonflies and Damselflies in Hertfordshire' in 2008 (available from the Hertfordshire Natural History Society: hnhs.org ), circumstances led to the vice county being without a dragonfly recorder just as the national atlas project was getting underway.

I agreed to fill the vacant position last year, with half of the five years available for atlas fieldwork already largely gone. A number of recorders have now provided me with records for the county for 2010, but I have unfortunately not yet had time to sort through the data to produce a summary of the coverage that has been achieved so far, despite the late start.

Although I am unable to give details of last year's season, I thought that I would take the opportunity to let anyone in the county know that I am now eagerly waiting to receive dragonfly and damselfly reports both for the national atlas, and in the years beyond. There are very active recording groups in some counties, and there has been an active dragonfly group in Hertfordshire in





the recent past. The data collected during the Hertfordshire dragonfly atlas project has provided a good base on which to build, but we now need to get out and see whether anything is different.

I am confident that it will still be possible to adequately survey the vice county during the two remaining fieldwork years, but with limited time now available it is obviously important for as many people as possible to send me their records. We know which species were in the county, and where they were found, a few years ago. Now we need to get out again and find out whether the species that were previously recorded are still present, and what has changed. The rapid spread of a number of dragonfly and damselfly species in parts of the country proves that a lot could have changed in the five years since the Hertfordshire atlas field work was finished – next year I hope to be summarising some of the more interesting changes!

## Berkshire – VC 22

Mike Turton

The first 2010 records for Berkshire were on 17<sup>th</sup> April with **Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* reported in Sonning. Honours for last species flying (on 19<sup>th</sup> November) were shared between **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum* and **Southern Hawker** *Aeshna cyanea*. John Ward-Smith recorded 5 species on the wing on 3rd November: **Common Blue Damselfly**, **Migrant Hawker**, **Common Darter**, **Black Darter** and **Southern Hawker**. There were reports of **Common Blue Damselfly** *Enallagma cyathigerum* as late as 3<sup>rd</sup> November this year (a new record for the county).

Highlight for 2010 has to be the influx of **Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense*. Records in 2009 at Wildmoor and on the River Loddon (the first records since 1999) were followed by records of one or two individuals at no less than 7 sites in 2010 as far north as Reading and west to Greenham Common, with a further isolated sighting at Radley.

**Common Club-tail** *Gomphus vulgatissimus* was more numerous this year. It was recorded from a

number of locations along the River Thames from Abingdon to Windsor; the first time that it has been recorded this far east in Berkshire. Since it was first recorded in the county in 2005, **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* has spread throughout the county, being recorded in 2010 from Bracknell in the east to Thatcham in the west and as far north as Radley Lakes and Shellingford. Breeding was reported as far west as Burghfield.

Following a decline in records countywide since 2006 and no records at all in 2009, **Common Hawker** *Aeshna juncea* made a welcome return in 2010 with records from the Bracknell area of at least 2 adults from Wildmoor and an ovipositing female at Bush Fields in Swinley Forest. An exuvia was found at another site in Swinley Forest, indicating that the species was present in the Bracknell area for at least some of the time since it was last recorded there in 2006.

**Brilliant Emerald** *Somatochlora metallica* had a particularly good year and was recorded at nine local sites in the Bracknell area as well as Decoy Heath and Paices Wood in West Berkshire.

Records now exist for all 10km squares in the county except for one square which covers a small area on the county boundary to the west of Lambourn. The main area where

the species counts are below the county threshold and where records are (understandably) thinly spread are the chalk downs north of the M4 corridor. More records would also be welcome from the upper Loddon Valley (south of the M4).

More details can be found in the annual report which will be available (hopefully) in March.

## Suffolk – VC 25 & 26

Adrian Parr

Suffolk made national headlines in 2009 with the discovery of large numbers of **Willow Emerald Damselfly** in the southeast of the county, apparently in the process of colonising the region. During 2010 a number of teneral were indeed observed, and many of the key sites from the previous year again supported good numbers of individuals. A number of new records were also made, particularly later in the season. This rather suggests a degree of local wandering, but all-in-all there wasn't to be a dramatic range expansion by the main population. The first records for West Suffolk were however made near Sudbury in early September, and a site was discovered near Corton in the north of the county, close to the Norfolk border. This later site is interesting in that adults have as yet not been seen there, but instead the record is based upon the discovery of



Immature female Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly in the *aurantiaca* phase. Steve Jones





the characteristic oviposition marks in branches of waterside willows. These tracks of small galls in the bark of young branches persist for some years, and actually provide a way of recording the species even during winter!

Apart from the Willow Emerald Damselflies there were several other highlights. Following records in 2009, **Scarce Chasers** were again sighted along the River Gipping near Needham Market, suggesting that this river has now been successfully colonised (the species until recently used to occur only on the River Stour, and this population itself is seemingly also of relatively recent origin). The **Variable Damselfly** has few sites in West Suffolk, and populations are small, so it was also encouraging to have individuals reported for the first time from the Lakenheath RSPB Reserve. This area has had a lot of work put into it over recent years, principally to improve its status for birds, and it would seem that the work is also paying dividends for dragonflies. As for other species, it was a good year for many of the Hawkers, and it was pleasing to see that this extended even to the **Norfolk Hawker**. This was recorded in good numbers along the coastal strip in the Minsmere/Sizewell/North Warren area; there were even a few sightings from less-suitable habitat

a little inland, probably reflecting wandering individuals. It would seem that the Suffolk sub-population of Norfolk Hawker continues to go from strength to strength, which must be good news for one of Britain's rarest dragonflies.

Finally, it should be noted that both the neighbouring counties of Norfolk and Essex were involved in the immigrations of Southern Emerald Damselfly and Southern Migrant Hawker that were seen during summer 2010, and perhaps arrivals of these species in Suffolk were missed. Given the potential for both species to have bred in Britain, observers will be out checking this year!

### Norfolk – VC 27 & 28

*Pam Taylor*

As I write this entry for Darter, I still have records to input into the recording system, but 2010 does seem to have been a rather quiet year in Norfolk. We haven't had any great influx of migrants, just one or two **Red-veined Darters** and the odd **Southern Emerald Damselfly**. Our only **Willow Emeralds** were at Strumpshaw Fen, where a pair was first seen in 2009. The number of observers has also declined from over fifty to about forty last year. I know the reasons for two or three

people, but the remaining decline is concerning. I only hope it doesn't stem from anyone thinking that Norfolk is completely recorded, because although that may be (almost) true at the 10km level, it certainly isn't true on a finer scale.

Having looked at some early draft maps for the national atlas, Norfolk coverage is looking quite good, but it's apparent a lot of sites have only been visited once since the year 2000. For a meaningful atlas, these sites ought to be recorded again during the next two seasons, to confirm that species are still present. Large areas of west Norfolk need checking again, as does much of east Norfolk away from the Broads. I also require more people to keep a special lookout for Norfolk Hawker, because casual records and transect data are needed to monitor the effects of our Biodiversity Action Plan work for this species.

Last summer I asked for help at St Benet's Abbey. Nine volunteers conducted surveys and seventeen species were identified. The survey report contributed towards a Heritage Lottery Fund application by Norfolk Archaeological Trust for conservation work at the site. If you would like details of this year's special targets and projects, please contact me for details and species maps as soon as possible.

### Cambridgeshire – VC 29

*Val Perrin*

During 2010 an attempt was made to visit water bodies in the county that had not previously been recorded so far during the Atlas period in order that as even coverage of the 10 km squares within the county as possible will be achieved by the end of the recording period.

The first teneral damselfly (**Large Red**) was recorded by the author at Wicken Fen on 24 April but the weather over the first May bank holiday was very mixed. Due to a short holiday abroad subsequently, Odonata recording did not get under way in earnest until 22 May, when warm sunny conditions enabled recording of the common damselflies, including **Banded Demoiselle**, and also the **Hairy Dragonfly** along



The River Medway flooding in January 2010. Nicholas Donnithorne



stretches of the River Great Ouse and Mare Fen at Swavesey. The system of fenland lodes (several long straight parallel dykes stretching for several miles, dating back to Roman times) south of Wicken Fen was visited, with an attempt to cover these as broadly as possible. Despite warm, sunny conditions, numbers of Odonata here were very low.

In mid-June another stretch of the Great Ouse from Offord Cluny towards Huntingdon was surveyed, with reasonable numbers of the commoner species being seen. With a boat owner colleague's help, several concerted efforts were also made in July to look for **White-legged Damselfly** along this river at different locations. This less common species has a very limited distribution in the county. Small numbers were found at two disparate sites; quite why the species is confined to a few metres of river bank when apparently identical habitat occurs for large distances on either side is unknown.

Further recording took place during the flight season at Roswell Pits, Ely, other sections of the Great Ouse south of St Neots and around Holywell, Ouse Fen, Woodwalton Fen. At the time of writing more data is expected from other recorders. Next season further help will be needed to cover other unrecorded areas in the north of Cambridgeshire.

## Bedfordshire – VC 30

*David Anderson*

The year can best be described as a relatively quiet one for Bedfordshire with all of the usual 21 species being recorded, but without any migrant or colonizing species being seen. All 21 species had a good year, being recorded as Ovipositing with the exception of Scarce Chaser which was however seen as Emerging.

A total of 1994 records have been obtained so far from 68 different observers. The first record was on the 17<sup>th</sup> April, as always of a **Large Red Damselfly** and finished on the 19<sup>th</sup> November with again the usual **Common Darter**. Both dates are within a few days of the 2009 dates, although the number of observers is down on 2009, but the number of records is up. Fewer people seems



White-legged Damselflies in tandem. Dick Eastwood.

to be getting more records; a sign of a relatively good dragonfly year?

The least recorded species in the county was the **Scarce Chaser** with just nine records, but it does occur only on a five Kilometre length of the River Great Ouse, from the county boundary south. In 2009 there were 10 records, so the species had an average year. Our other scarce species is the **Downy Emerald** with 21 records as against just 6 records in 2009. However matching these 21 records in 2010 is the **White-legged Damselfly** which had 29 records in 2009, so there seem to be winners and losers.

One observation was the low numbers of the **Blue-tailed Damselfly**. In 2009 they were seen 14 times in the group size D, but in 2010 they were seen just four times at this group size and most records were for just ones and twos.

Most contributors record from well watched sites with a good range of species, but Helen Hyre found

her way into two Stately Homes, producing new records. Helen found me from the BDS website, so proving its worth. Local email groups, both for Birds and other groups, were also a good source of records.

## Northamptonshire – VC 32

*Mark Tyrrell*

With 2009 being such an important year for Dragonflies in Northants, I had high expectations for 2010. Would the Red-veined Darter return? Did any larvae survive the winter to emerge in spring? Would the Variable Damselfly make another appearance? Alas, none of these happened. The severe winter from November to mid January kept most of our ponds deeply frozen and if any Red-veined Darter larvae remained, they did not survive as no emergees were seen in May and no adults were seen in June/July. There were other sightings of note though. The **Beautiful Demoiselle** continues its march westwards on the River Nene, with sightings at Delapre Abbey in Northampton, at the Yardley Chase





MOD ponds and most interestingly of all, in a garden in Kingsthorpe just off the Brampton Valley Way tributary of the Nene. There are several potentially good rivers not far from here that may soon support breeding colonies not least of which is the Brampton Valley Way itself where some sections close to its source match habitats in the east of the county where this species has its stronghold.

**Scarce Chaser** had a good year, with a mass emergence witnessed towards the end of May, with in excess of 100 adults taking their first flights at around 0930hrs. I visited the same site only a few days earlier and saw only 3 adults - the mass emergence happened on a Monday morning when I was at work! A new colony was recorded at Stanwick Lakes, which is the furthest downstream so far, apart from records of individual males. I have been monitoring this site for several years in the expectation that they would eventually appear.

**Small Red-eyed Damselflies** had a quiet year, with their season starting and finishing earlier than usual. I suspect now that colonies have been established for 6 years now, they are emerging at their 'normal' time. Wicksteed Park was added to the list of sites with this species where ovipositing was recorded in early July. **Downy Emeralds** continue to thrive at Yardley Chase and I am still receiving potential sightings at nearby Salcey Forest but none have yet been confirmed there.

## Gloucestershire – VC 33 & 34

Ingrid Twissell

In between the first damselfly reported on 18<sup>th</sup> April, a **Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*, in the Cotswold Water Park, and the last sighting of a dragonfly on 16<sup>th</sup> November, a **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum*, in the Forest of Dean, some notable events happened.

By the end of May, 17 species had been reported, including a possible female **Variable Damselfly** *Coenagrion pulchellum*. The colouration of this insect was very like a female, and the photograph



Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, near Penrhyndeudreath, Snowdonia. The only site in North Wales where Downy Emerald is found. Allan Brandon.

was sent off for confirmation, or otherwise. Unfortunately the defining feature was not well illustrated on the photograph, although the abdominal colouration seemed correct, so I am loathe to report that it was a definite sighting. The insect was not seen again, although thoroughly searched for. This damselfly has only been seen once before in Gloucestershire, in 1998, in the Forest of Dean.

During June, 4 more species made an appearance. The highlight of this month was the discovery of the **Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense* at Woodchester Park NR, when two males and a female were spotted. This site is well away from the known breeding site at WWT Slimbridge, and seeing the presence of both sexes here makes one wonder if breeding hasn't occurred. It will be well worth another visit! The reason for visiting Woodchester Park was to establish whether the **Downy Emerald** *Cordulia aenea* was still present, as only historical records existed. To actually photograph adult males of both species on the same leaf was amazing!

The **Downy Emerald** appeared at several locations in the Forest of Dean (FOD) this year, including a female ovipositing in a pond at The Rising Sun, this being a new site.

The **Common Clubtail** *Gomphus vulgatissimus* was spotted on two dates in the Cinderford Linear Park-North, FOD, in June. There have been very few sightings in the FOD of this species, although it appears along the R. Wye on occasion, and it was present in small numbers in its usual locations near Tewkesbury – The Mythe and Twynning. The **Scarce Chaser** *Libellula fulva* was present in good numbers along the R. Avon at Twynning, and a few were present at The Mythe and Slimbridge. In July, 4 more species were sighted. The **Downy Emerald** has been spreading in the Cotswold Water Park (CWP) in recent years, and in 2010, a new location was discovered in the CWP-E, at Lake 101a, Horcott. Also during this month a new location for the **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* was discovered in the wetland area at Hartpur Perry Pear Orchard, and two re-appeared at Coombe Hill Canal NR, this sighting being the first since the floods of 2007.

August brought sightings of the **Black Darter** *Sympetrum danae* at Edgehills, but only very few were seen which was disappointing after the large numbers seen in 2009. Let's hope in 2011 the numbers increase. The Edgehills pond is a superb breeding location for the **Common Hawker** *Aeshna juncea*;



on one visit over 60 exuviae were collected around the margins of the pond, and we saw several emerging adults. The last species to be spotted in 2010 was the **Migrant Hawker** *A. mixta* bringing the total number of species for the year to 26, possibly 27.

And on a last note: on a cool but sunny day on 20<sup>th</sup> October, in the Forest of Dean, we had a sighting of a male **Common Hawker**, a female **Southern Hawker** *A. cyanea* ovipositing, and 13 **Common Darters**, including a tandem pair.

## Worcestershire – VC 37

Mike Averill

2010 started with very cold weather in January and February and so the first dragonfly emergences were somewhat later than last year. The monthly temperatures were also not very high with no heat wave weather this year. Much of the year was also dry in Worcestershire with only June and August reaching above average rainfall. The long run of dry months produced drought conditions in many regions and locally Hartlebury Bog went dry as early as mid July. Over the last ten years it has been seen that the Bog goes dry very readily in low rainfall years and sadly this was case this year making it the first time



Hairy Dragonflies in tandem, Churton. David Kitching.

for 4 years that the bog had gone completely dry.

The affect of the weather was that the **Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo* had another good year and was recorded outside its usual haunts. It was also a good year for the **Common Clubtail** *Gomphus vulgatissimus* as well with the highest emergences for 10 years. Another river species, the **Scarce Chaser** *Libellula fulva* was once again seen outside its usual core area of the Avon below Pershore. This time it was seen at Upton Warren and Hurcott Pool, Kidderminster. The last record is interesting because although it is totally outside its range the male was present for two weeks and at the end it showed the rubbing signs on the abdomen that are made during copulation. As no other individual *L. fulva* was seen at Hurcott it begs the question as to where this pairing was taking place and why was it at a still water situation. The whole issue of dragonflies being present without giving much indication occurred again at Kidderminster where an ordinary garden pond produced the emergence of 9 **Common Hawkers** *Aeshna juncea* despite no sign of this heathland dragonfly having been seen there in the previous 7 years.

Darter dragonfly sightings often result from the influx of migrant species if the weather favours continental movements, but this year there were no **Red-veined Darters** *Sympetrum fonscolombei* seen.

The **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* is often mentioned in small numbers in these annual reports (there were 3 for instance at Ipsley Alders in early August), but this year there was a surprise as hundreds were seen at Croome Landscape Park near Kempsey. They were first seen on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August and they were visible for about 6 weeks. Showing signs of breeding they were to be seen sitting on the water milfoil and algae along with the odd **Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma najas*. Next season is eagerly awaited in order to search for the possible successful emergences and exuviae.

Finally there is the possibility

that a retrospective record may be confirmed as the 29<sup>th</sup> species in Worcestershire. In 2008, Des Jennings had taken a photo of a female damselfly that looked interesting, but at the time it was thought not to show sufficient detail to confirm its identity. At the moment the photo is being considered by the Dragonfly Rarities Committee so we await the outcome with interest. The reason the identification is so difficult is that there is a very similar blue form of the Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* to the female Variable Damselfly. The only reliable feature is the more deeply lobed rear margin of the pronotum on the upper surface of the prothorax on the Variable Damselfly, just behind the eyes.

## Radnorshire – VC 43

Bob Dennison

The 2010 recording effort was even more fruitful than 2009, resulting in 609 records from 22 contributors (as compared with 496 records from 25 contributors in 2009). As with 2009, we recorded 23 species altogether – 14 species of dragonfly and 9 species of damselfly, representing all of Radnorshire's 'regulars'.

Although no new species were added in 2010 to our historic VC total of 25, we improved coverage of various species across the 21 O.S. 10-km squares which Radnorshire comprises.

### White-legged Damselflies

*Platycnemis pennipes* were plentiful along the River Wye, with more sightings (and photographs) than in any year I can remember of **Common Club-tail** *Gomphus vulgatissimus* and the two species of **Demoiselles**. However, recent records are heavily biased towards SO13, SO14 and SO24 and we should now focus on moving water in other 10-km squares, particularly the upper Wye, the rivers Ithon, Lugg & Teme and their respective tributaries.

**Keeled Skimmers** *Orthetrum coerulescens* were recorded not only in their Elenydd stronghold in the West, but also at three new Radnorshire locations. In late June / early July, Ian Standen established their presence for the first time on



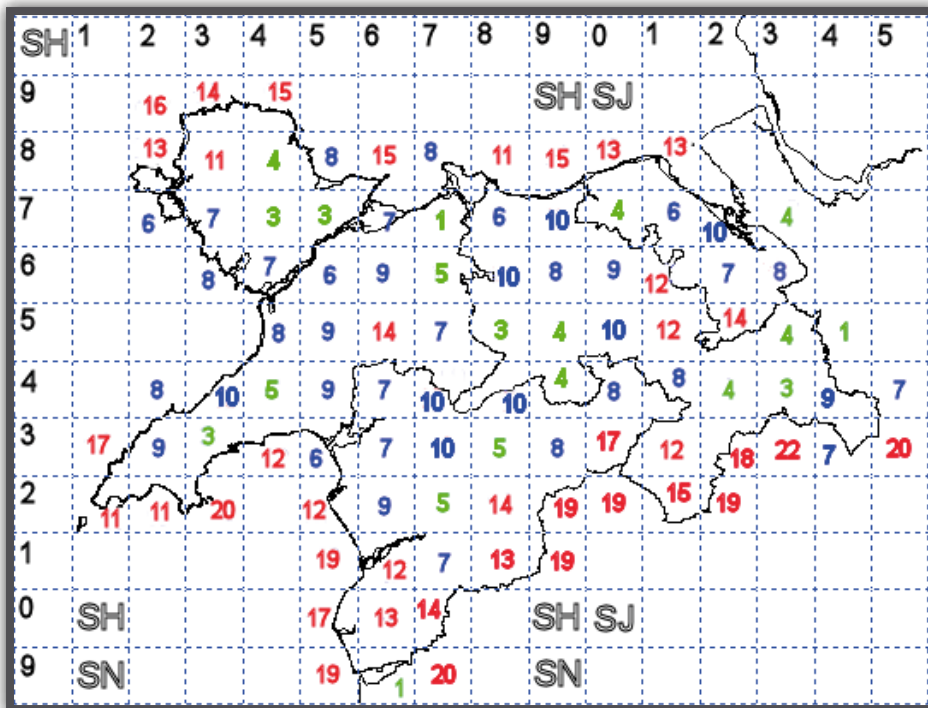


Figure 5. Recording priority in North Wales. Allan Brandon.

Beacon Hill and Rhiw Pool [SO17 & SO16]. In late June, David Warren and Jane Bisby photographed a teneral female **Keeled Skimmer** at Llanellwedd Old Quarry - first record for the species in SO05.

Particular commendation goes to Dick Eastwood, who supplied over 250 of the VC43 records and who in two seasons has gone from 'dragonfly novice' to 'arch super-sleuth'! The recording in 2010 of **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** *Cordulegaster boltonii* in 10 out of Radnorshire's 21 O.S. 10-km squares was due in no small way to Dick's efforts.

Although Radnorshire is not short of acidic uplands, records in central and southern parts of the vice-county have historically been fewer in comparison to those from Elenydd in the west. Thanks to 27 records from 11 observers, we now have a more representative spread of records for this species - topped off by an excellent piece of detective work from 'star pupil', Dick.

In early August, he set off to scour Llanbedr Hill in search of **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** exuviae. Low down in the vegetation along the bank of a small stream, he managed to find and collect not one, but two needles in the proverbial haystack - thereby proving breeding for this

species in SO14.

As the flight season was drawing to a close, September and October saw a flurry of **Migrant Hawker** *Aeshna mixta* records and photographs from Dick. Observing up to nine individuals at one time, Dick secured the first VC43 evidence of breeding by photographing egg-laying at Llanbwchlyn and later at a site on the Begwns.

## North Wales – VC 48 – 52

Allan Brandon

Focussed recording across the five North Wales Vice Counties is slowly filling in the species gaps at the 10 km square resolution but there are still quite a few squares that remain poorly covered. Estimates of the number of species yet to be discovered have been worked out for each 10km grid square in North Wales (Figure 5). The numbers in red are those with the most species yet to be discovered and these squares should be prioritised when recording for the atlas. Those in blue are the next priority, green numbers are the lowest priority but there is still potential to find new species in these grid squares. Many partial 10 km squares along the north Welsh coast and in the south-west may appear under-recorded but the high figures shown probably reflect the lack of

suitable species habitat in such small areas rather than a lack of effort made in recording.

I have received many helpful photographs in the last few years. For example, a photograph taken at Presthaven Sands caravan park, Prestatyn turned out to be the very first record 10 km square SJ08 of **Common Darter**. Photos of a male and female **Ruddy Darter** were a completely new record for Flintshire and for 10 km square SJ27. Photos of a **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** on the banks of River Alyn at Hope turned out to be a new record for SJ35, for the Alyn river system and for eastern Flintshire! Thanks to Susan Loose, Linda Jones and Maria Blagojevic respectively for sending these photos.

Following on from new discoveries of **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura pumilio* populations in North Wales in the last few years there is further good news to report. It was seen at Cors Bodgynydd and also by Dave Lamacraft at the most northerly extremity of the long Cors Geirch nature reserve at Plasynghedidio near Morfa Nefyn where it had not been recorded from that part of the reserve before. Stephen and Anne Coker saw plenty of **Variable Damselfly** *Coenagrion pulchellum* at Llyn Rhos Ddu near Newborough, Anglesey where it was last recorded by Les Colley in 1980.

Dave Lamacraft was sure he saw a **Brown Hawker** *Aeshna grandis* whilst cycling the lanes near the Afon Soch near Llangian on the Lleyn on the 15<sup>th</sup> August. Like the Ruddy Darter, this is an eastern species in North Wales and its status west of the Clwydian range is uncertain.

Annual **Clubtail** *Gomphus vulgatissimus* surveys that were carried out in mid-May along the Welsh bank of the Dee in 1 km square SH4153 found the species thriving along with **White-legged Damselflies**. Thanks to Emma Broad, Adrian Lloyd Jones and Neil Frisewell for their surveys along the stretch of river both up and downstream of the new road bridge at Holt.

**Black-tailed Skimmers** have been



seen at several new sites. These are the Dee valley near Llangollen, south-east of Rhuddlan, the old Point of Ayr Colliery with evidence of successful breeding, Rhuddlan Nature Reserve, Cors Geirch NNR, Llyn Peninsular and Llyn Coron near Aberffraw, Anglesey. Many thanks to John Lawton Roberts, Simon Hughes, Dave Thorpe, Julian Weldrick, Bob Dennison, Les Colley and Will Williams for their efforts in recording this species.

The **North Wales Dragonfly Newsletter** contains news, event details, articles and photos relevant to the region and currently has 138 subscribers. I send roughly 10 issues out each year by e-mail to interested natural historians and if you would like to have your name added to the list please let me know. Also if you would like more detail on species that are potentially missing from 10km grid squares or about any of the sightings mentioned, please contact me.

I am planning a dragonfly recording trip to Snowdonia with some Snowdonia National Park colleagues in 2011; please contact me if you would like to join us.

## Leicestershire – VC 55

Ian Merrill

Without doubt the most exciting event of 2010 was Matthew Billings' discovery of a small colony of

**Common Hawkers** at New Lount Nature Reserve on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Between this date and 8<sup>th</sup> August records of ones and twos of this species were submitted by several visitors, including an observation of ovipositing on 31<sup>st</sup> July. Prior to Matthew's discovery this species was considered to be an irregular migrant to VC55, however a female **Common Hawker** photographed at New Lount in August 2007 was, in hindsight, clearly either an early indication of the presence of this colony or the original colonist herself!

Matthew's determined recording efforts brought further rewards in the form of the first **Hairy Dragonflies** for Frisby Gravel Pits on 5<sup>th</sup> June and also the first **Small Red-eyed Damselfies** for the Soar Valley (and the western-most in VC55) with their discovery at Watermead Country Park on 19<sup>th</sup> August.

Some sterling canal-walking efforts by Lorraine Ellison and Barbara Vickers led to a more thorough understanding of the current Odonata populations on the Grantham Canal, one of VC55's premier sites. Meanwhile I concentrated my efforts on the lower reaches of the River Welland and finally managed to complete my quest to survey every 1km grid square of this watercourse, which is important for **White-legged Damselfly**.

Looking ahead to the 2013 atlas it

would be highly beneficial if 2011 recording efforts concentrated on more obscure sites in under-recorded areas. We already know what can be found at many canals and established nature reserves but there are still some gaping holes in the distribution maps which need to be plugged; please email me direct if you would like to know where the gaps are in your personal locality or favoured recording area.

It would also be good to know where we really stand with our **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** population in 2011. There are currently just nine known sites for this species, all in the centre and east of VC55. Surely there must be more lurking out there, so let's get out and find them in the late summer and put some dots on that atlas!

## Cheshire – VC 58

David Kitching

The season began on 22nd April when **Large-red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* was recorded at Thurstaston Common, and the latest record for the year was a solitary male **Migrant Hawker** *Aeshna mixta* spotted at Anderton Nature Park on November 6th.

A mixed year for Odonata with much of July dull and damp. However, the early summer saw good numbers of dragonflies and the range of the **Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense* continues to expand with good numbers, particularly in west Cheshire close to the Dee. The spread of **Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* has now encompassed all but the upland areas as it was recorded at Poynton Pool in the east and Inner Marsh Farm to the west. **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** *Cordulegaster boltonii* was seen at Farndon on the Dee once again, but also in south Cheshire at Bickley Hall farm and in the central area on Forge Brook near Northwich. It is possible that this species is looking to establish itself within Cheshire.

Species showing a decline in sightings included the **White-legged Damselfly** *Platycnemis pennipes* with only one record from the Dee at Aldford. **Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum* was also seen less



Azure Damselflies in tandem, Whirley. David Kitching.





often in west and central areas and completely absent in the east.

Cheshire is not noted for sightings of large numbers of migrant Odonata and the late July arrival of a male **Lesser Emperor** *Anax parthenope* at the RSPB Inner Marsh Farm reserve on the Dee estuary was a notable event, being only the second ever record for the county. The fact that this insect was spotted reflects an increasing knowledge and awareness of Odonata in the birding community.

Recording in Cheshire produced plenty of information from most of the county, but we are still short of information from south and south-east Cheshire and the Wirral. Species that would be worth looking for in the next couple of years are **Variable Damselfly** *Coenagrion pulchellum* and **Hairy Dragonfly** *Brachytron pratense* in the west to the south of Churton and in the central areas south of Winsford. **Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo* is probably under-recorded on the streams running into the Weaver between Crewe and Winsford and also to the west of the A41 between Malpas and Broxton.

Details by month with photographs can be found on the Cheshire Odonata website at [www.brocross.com/dfly/dfly.htm](http://www.brocross.com/dfly/dfly.htm)

## North-east Yorkshire – VC 62

Keith Gittens

The year was one of mixed fortunes, getting off to a good start particularly for records of **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa*. One site on the edge of the Hambleton Hills, which has only occasional records for this species had close to double figures with plenty of breeding activity noted.

As the summer progressed wind became a regular feature and when combined with cloud affected recording. A lack of rain resulting in the drying up of pools particularly at lowland heath sites like Strensall Common.

**Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* produced some new records with breeding activity noted at two new sites, one atop the North York Moors near Goathland. This latter site also produced a blue form female of **Common Hawker** *Aeshna juncea* in cop. The pair conveniently spent some time in the heather allowing it to be photographed by the group that were out dragonfly hunting that day.

While **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** *Cordulegaster boltonii* is regularly recorded on the eastern side of the North York Moors records from the

west are scarce, however one site to the west was identified, having adults present and a return visit will be made to look for larvae. There is a need to investigate the western side of the moors further for this species.

The site near Scarborough where **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* was discovered in 2009 produced a number of males in 2010, however no breeding activity or females were noted. It will be interesting to see what can be found in 2011.

There were few records for **Migrant Hawker**, all of which were individuals. This was in contrast with a good number of records for 2009.

Thanks once again to all those who sent records in.

## South-west and North-west Yorkshire – VC 63 & 65

Tom Hubball

I'm going to use my space in Darter to make a plea to all dragonfly recorders to get out there and send those sightings to me. In order to get as many dots on the map as possible for the forthcoming atlas, I would like as many records as possible. Not surprisingly, given its size, there are plenty of blank spaces on the map that need investigating but I would particularly like sightings from the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the south side of Teesdale and the South Pennines. Other areas where we've received few records from are the major conurbations of Sheffield, Doncaster, Barnsley, Bradford, Leeds and York. We also need records from gardens. It appears that recorders don't mind travelling to country parks and nature reserves but hardly ever record what's going on in their own or neighbours garden pond. So please go out this summer and make a note of what you see, whether it's just a single damselfly on the local duck pond or a super site with fifteen or more species and fill a space in the atlas. In years to come, you can look back and say "that dot there...that's mine, that is".



Loughrigg Tarn, Ambleside, Cumbria (NY30): one of many Lake District sites for Downy Emerald. David Clarke.



**Cumbria – VC 69 & 70***David Clarke*

The sunniest season for several years, though many shallow waters, bogs and runnels suffered from the drought, which lasted until July.

Numbers of the **Banded Demoiselle** in the north of the county seemed unaffected by the hard winter, which had started to freeze rivers. Once again there were a couple of instances of single individuals at southerly sites – which could have been dispersers from the north-advancing Lancashire populations. Searches by Ian Brodie of targeted sites in the south however failed to reveal any established colonies.

Amongst other damselflies, the **Variable Damselfly** has been a particular concern and it is good that Pete and Barbara Nelson have started to monitor what may be the only remaining site in the county (in NY00) for this Biodiversity Action Plan species. Cumbria Wildlife Trust is supporting the training for this process, which I have led. Undiscovered populations might yet be found at isolated pools with neutral fen vegetation, in west Cumbria especially.

**Broad-bodied Chasers** and **Black-tailed Skimmers** have provided the most news-worthy records. At least two reports of the former showed clear evidence of local breeding, especially the exuviae and adults from a garden pond at Kendal (SD59). Some 12-15 **Black-tailed Skimmers** appeared at a large water-body in the NW of the county near Cockermouth (NY03) in July and are very likely to have bred: hopefully this may become a base for local colonisation. Another small population continues near the coast in the SW of the county near Gosforth (NY00).

In the Lake District, key species such as **Beautiful Demoiselle**, **Downy Emerald** and **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** have all been recorded; a strong emergence of **Keeled Skimmers** was taking place at a Borrowdale site (NY21) in early June – showing, here at least, welcome resilience in the face of the drought.

Amongst species newer to the

county, **Emperors** are increasingly recorded, but **Ruddy Darter** (first found 1997) shows far less evidence of consolidation, so it was good to find that one colony near Wigton (NY25) was holding up well.

Of two minor colonies of **White-faced Darter**, one produced positive results, including a mating pair, thanks to observer Colin Adams; Mo Richards' searches at the other sadly gave negative results. On a more positive note, the first translocations of larvae from the Carlisle site for this species were made to Foulshaw Moss in the south of the county – a process to be repeated for at least 2011 and 2012.

As ever, records for the county have been heavily dependent on a combination of many casual reports and others from the few who undertake more regular visits to certain areas and sites. More records from the west of the county and from sites s-east of Kendal in the area bounded by the M6/A683/A65 would be especially welcome.

**Scotland – VC 72 – 112***Pat Batty*

Scotland had a harsh winter and an exceptionally dry spring with little rain until July. This meant emergence for some species was a fortnight later, and there were low numbers of the **Common Darter**. Bog pools disappeared completely. There were a few scattered records for **Azure Hawker** and no larvae found. The **Northern Emerald** however, had an amazing year. Exuviae were found amongst sphagnum where there was no standing water. A new most northerly site was found on BDS meet at Loch Achall in Wester Ross and the meet in Morven uncovered new sites and squares. New sites were found near Inveraray, on Rannoch Moor and in Glen Garry. A larva confirmed breeding at Flanders Moss

The **Brilliant Emerald** was found near Fort Augustus by John and Viv Phillips, extending its range in the Loch Ness area. Larry Templeton discovered a very good site for **White-faced Darter** near Strathpeffer.

Stephen Corcoran found a number of new sites for **Northern Damselfly** in the Aviemore area, including one threatened by the expansion of Tesco in the village. Ron Youngman also found it in a new square above Ballingluig, in the Logierait area.

The **Keeled Skimmer** had another good year, new squares were discovered in Argyll and Wigtonshire, also on Mull thanks to the field work of Anand Prasad and Lynn Farrell, the **Beautiful Demoiselle** has also extended its range here.

The **Banded Demoiselle** is spreading along the River Whiteadder and it was seen near Newmains Farm near St Abbs and at Black Sark near Gretna.

The **Southern Hawker** continues its spread. The **Emperor Dragonfly** seems established in Scotland, newly emerging at Newmains, females were again seen egg laying here and at Whinney ponds. The **Broad Bodied Chaser** was also at Newmains and the **Black-tailed Skimmer** was seen, the first since 2006.

The **Migrant Hawker** was absent from the SE but had its best year ever in the SW, seen at four sites. The atlas work continues many thanks to **all** who have contributed Barbara and Richard Mearns for co-ordinating efforts in the SW and to Andy Riches for all his recording here, David Graham in the SE, Barabara MacRitchie in the NW, Ron Youngman in Perthshire, Audrey and Bob Turner in the NE, Larry Templeton for work in the North and many others like Gill and John Brookes who visited under recorded squares on their holidays. I have collated well over 3000 records! Thanks also to Stephen Corcoran and Jonathon Willet for their work and for running courses to enthuse others.

However Scotland is huge, with lots of gaps in coverage particularly in Caithness, Sutherland, Shetland, N Skye, areas of the NE and Aberdeenshire, also in the central area. So if you are visiting in 2011 please help!



# A Dragonflying Visit to Scotland

John and Viv Phillips

In July 2010 we decided to head North of the Border to spend a few days doing a bit of recording for the National Dragonfly Atlas project in some less well-watched parts of Scotland. Another reason for the trip was to look for the Scottish specialities, Northern Damselfly *Coenagrion hastulatum*, Northern Emerald *Somatochlora arctica* and Azure Hawker *Aeshna caerulea* none of which we had ever seen. As a bonus, we also hadn't seen Brilliant Emerald *Somatochlora metallica*, even though they live in south-east England as well as the Scottish Highlands.

We contacted the Scottish recorder, Pat Batty, and asked if there were any particularly poorly-covered 10 km squares that could do with a visit, in Vice-Counties 88, 96 and 97 (Mid-Perthshire, Easternness and Westernness)? Almost by return of email Pat sent a breakdown of all the 10km squares in all three VCs, with lists of all the species recorded in each square separated into pre-and post - 2000 records!

So, armed with this very helpful information, and also the useful

booklet "Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Highlands", produced by Highland County Council, on July 10th we checked in at the Blackford Hotel, Blackford, near Auchterarder. Not an obvious destination perhaps for a holiday in Scotland, unless you are into golf (it's between Stirling and Perth, not far from Gleneagles) - but we'd discovered there had never been any records of any dragonflies in 10km square NN90, in the regions around Dollar and Tillicoultry. Looking at the Ordnance Survey map, we came up with a good reason why: there appeared to be hardly any standing water in the square, or at least hardly any that was reasonably accessible. However we did find a pond or small lake (or even "wee lochan") mapped in the north of the square fairly close to a road in NN9709, so we decided to give it a try. So on July 11th we drove up a long narrow twisting road, parked near where we thought the lake must be, and blundered off into the hinterland. As far as we could learn from the Internet, there is legal open access to practically all land in Scotland, but it still felt a bit strange to us to be climbing over the gate with not a "public right of way" sign in

sight. However almost immediately a very friendly farmer appeared and said of course it was OK if we went to look for the lake. Mind you he also told us it wasn't actually his land. Anyway we found the lake - artificial it turned out, where a stream or burn had been dammed years ago to make a trout-fishing lake, but looking good all the same. Despite not all that great weather (cool, dull and windy) we managed to find two species: Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa* and Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*. Success! Two dots on the map! There are probably more species to be found there if anyone is ever passing in better weather...

From there we drove to Perth, ate our first mutton pie of the trip in a café, and continued via Pitlochry and Dalwhinnie to Fort Augustus (or Cill Chuimein in Gaelic), on the Caledonian Canal in the Great Glen. We knew there was a *C. hastulatum* site near Pitlochry, but we virtuously decided not to stop en route (anyway the weather wasn't all that great).

At Fort Augustus we checked into Bank House, a really excellent B&B which we would recommend to anyone. We spent five nights based there. Fort A. is quite a lively (though far from raucous) little holiday town with some good pubs and places to eat - we would recommend the Lock Inn, right by the canal.

On July 12th we decided to reward ourselves for putting NN90 on the map by going "twitching" in Glen Affric, so we drove to the Dog Falls car park and walked through the woods to Coire Loch (in NH2928), a well-known site for "Emerald" dragonflies. The weather was not all that great (overcast, intermittent slight rain and decidedly cool), so we were surprised to see quite a few Emeralds patrolling the water's edge as we arrived. Were they perhaps *S. metallica*? Or even *S. arctica*? Well, no, they weren't - they were Downy Emerald *Cordulia aenea* - quite familiar to us in our local patch, the Forest of Dean. Still it was nice to see them whizzing around, apparently heedless of the steady drizzle. We also added Golden-ringed Dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii* to our trip list, and then spent



The small lake in NN9709. John Phillips.





an enjoyable hour or two exploring the glen from the road.

On the way up from Fort Augustus that morning we'd noticed an interesting-looking little lake by the road near Cannich (Lochan Dubh, NH370322), so on the way back, in a brief bright interlude, we stopped off for a look. This involved a bit of a scramble down the road embankment, but when we got there it was well worth it - no new species for this well-recorded square, but seven species of dragonflies before the rain closed in again, including three new ones for our trip: several White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia dubia* which we don't see very often, Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* and Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*. We also had frustratingly brief views of a couple of very green, shiny-looking corduliids on the far side of the lochan - maybe *S. metallica*?

The next day, July 13th, we checked out NH40, near Fort Augustus, where Pat had received no post-2000 records. The weather was a bit better, with occasional warm sunshine. Like a lot of Highland squares, NH40 is largely remote from any roads, and we didn't think we had time to do any major hikes across country (especially with the weather being rather unpredictable). So we settled first of all for a look at Loch Tarff, quite a big loch right next to the B862 east of Fort A. (NH4209, the bits we visited). Here we logged seven species, including Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* new to our trip - and a very nice male *S. metallica*, completely new for the 10km square and new to us! Having seen this one we were sure those at Lochan Dubh the previous day were also this species. We also had some great views of an otter, which swam past right under our noses!

After our picnic lunch we thought we'd go and check out Borlum Loch, in the next 10km square to the east. However there were big signs up at the start of the track saying "No Access to Walkers or Hikers", so instead we headed back west into NH30, where only three species had been recorded since 2000. We walked up the footpath (General Wade's Military Road, in fact) for a



Coire Loch - Downy Emerald and Golden-ringed Dragonflies were seen here.  
John Phillips

few kilometres in the Culachy Falls area, due south of Fort Augustus, where the map marks a couple of tiny ponds. The one in NH3706 looked reasonably OK but not a typical upland pond, and anyway the sun went in, so we scored nil. The one in NH3705 had gone! It looked as if the dam had washed away. However there was a recently-constructed new pond just nearby, but it didn't look very promising (too new and unvegetated) and we didn't see anything on it. However, we did add Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea* to our list, just nearby. Seldom has *A. juncea* been examined so carefully, but try as we might, we could not "string" *A. caerulea*. At least it was the first post-2000 record for the square - as was *Cordulegaster*, also seen nearby.

The next day (14th) it poured with rain all day, so we went birding at Loch Ruthven RSPB reserve and saw Slavonian Grebes, and went to visit some friends near Inverness for the evening and saw our first ever Pine Martens (two together) by the roadside on the way back to Fort Augustus after dark!

My notebook entry for the next day reads, rather tersely, "Weather unsuitable for insects". We drove to Kinloch Hourn on the west coast and back, and saw a Black-throated Diver

and some Twite.

On 16th we left Fort Augustus and drove to Leeds, via Fort William, Crianlarich etc, and saw at least three Bottle-nosed Dolphins in the Loch Linnhe/Loch Eil area and a Red Kite over Doune. The day after that we went home to Gloucestershire.

We drove 1351 miles in total, of which 723 were in Scotland - a bit of a hefty carbon footprint, but in a good cause. Our trip list amounted to 10 dragonfly species, including one "tick" for us - needless to say, the only one out of our four potential Scottish "ticks" that we could also have seen in south-east England! We'll have to go back for the other three sometime. More to the point, we did succeed in getting a few useful records for the Atlas, and also saw a few nice birds, hoverflies and other insects, and enjoyed the lovely Highland scenery (when visible)... and despite the (perhaps predictably) not all that great weather, we had a really good time!

We can heartily recommend "square-bashing" - look on the website, get in touch with the VC recorder and find those under-recorded squares and go and have a look. And send the records in! It's interesting, useful, challenging - and very enjoyable!



## Field work in Ireland

**Nicholas Donnithorne**

In mid August I returned to Ireland for the eighth year to continue my studies of **Scarce Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes dryas*) and **Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes sponsa*). Due to business commitments this was a good six weeks later than normal. I hoped this would allow me to study these species and their habitats at the end of their season and I was not disappointed. I visited each area around Eire where I had found *dryas* in the past. Of 93 sites visited in 12 days, 44 were known sites and *dryas* was found at 27. Once again, there was no consistency between sites, even a short distance apart. Some were still very wet and some looked like dry grazing fields with areas of lank vegetation and no dragonflies.

This trip provided much late season data with many aged individuals studied with badly battered wings and has once again blown a lot of assumptions and "truths" about *dryas/sponsa* out the window. In particular, I found that late season *sponsa* can darken so much that

the male loses all blue pruinescence to look superficially like *dryas* and the female darkens so much that the second segment is almost useless. Even that lovely clotted cream and brown of *dryas* females was dark in August.

So amazingly, it would appear that an awful lot of the 100% certain ID characters are nowhere near that, dependant on age of the individual and your familiarity with the species. The pterostigma and female genitalia are fairly useless unless you have both species present or a scaled photograph. The eyes of the male can darken equally in both species. Just to add to the confusion, at more than one site I found both very aged and reasonably fresh male *sponsa*, with the young ones looking correct and the old ones easily mistaken for *dryas* if only given a quick glance. At least you can say that female *dryas* is always built big and *sponsa* thin, but only if you have the two together for comparison.

Parasitic flies were totally absent this year. Either this was due to the worst winter in Eire since 1981 or to the late date of my visit.



## Helping People Learn How to Identify Wildlife

**Martin Harvey**

In 2009 the Open University launched a website to help beginners learn how to identify wildlife, and go on to get involved in wildlife survey and conservation. The website is called iSpot, and can be found at: [ispot.org.uk](http://ispot.org.uk)

On iSpot, people can upload digital photos, and/or descriptions, of the species they've seen, and are encouraged to try identifying it for themselves. Other users on the site can click a button to show agreement with the suggested identification, or if it's not correct they can add an alternative species name. The site has been developed by the Open University's Biodiversity Observatory team, under the leadership of Professor Jonathan Silvertown, as part of the Open Air Laboratories project (OPAL).

A number of recording schemes and societies are helping with the identifications on iSpot, by having 'representatives' active on the site – people who are willing to spend some time checking identifications and answering queries on the site, and encouraging new observers to get more involved in recording. The British Dragonfly Society already has one representative on iSpot (who is Roy Woodward, a very active and helpful representative!) but if anyone else is interested in taking on this role we'd be grateful, and it all helps promote the BDS to other iSpot users. The full list of societies active in this way can be seen at: <http://ispot.org.uk/representatives>.

If you are willing to help in this way, please get in touch. You'll need to register on the iSpot website (this is free

to do), and then let me know your user name. With the BDS's agreement, I can then make sure you are 'badged' as representing BDS, so that whenever you post an observation or comment on the site the BDS logo appears next to it, with a link back to the BDS website.

iSpot is bringing new people in to observing and recording wildlife, and if we can also help promote the work of the BDS so much the better. iSpot is not intended to become an online recording system, but we are working with recording schemes and the NBN to set up a mechanism for passing on records to societies and county recorders. After our first full year of operation we have about 800 dragonfly/damselfly observations on iSpot, and no doubt some of them will be new dots for the distribution maps. The most frequently posted species on iSpot so far are Common Darter, Common Blue Damselfly and Large Red Damselfly, but there are observations of some of the rarer species too, such as this Scarce Chaser: <http://ispot.org.uk/node/40028>. Since iSpot is targeted at novice recorders there is always the chance of finding records from places that have not been visited before.

Another part of iSpot is developing new online keys, see: <http://ispot.org.uk/keys>. We already have a partially-developed (teneral?) key to Odonata in spring, but would like to extend this to cover all species, so if anyone would be willing to help with this please get in touch also.

To get involved, or if you have any questions about iSpot, please contact Martin Harvey: [M.C.Harvey@open.ac.uk](mailto:M.C.Harvey@open.ac.uk)

***iSpot is an OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) project, and is funded by the Big Lottery Fund. For more about OPAL see: [www.opalexplornature.org](http://www.opalexplornature.org)***



## DRAGONFLY RECORDING NETWORK

Please send your records to the correct Vice-County Recorder, who will send data to the DRN National Database.

Vice-County	Vice-County Recorder	Contact details
<b>ENGLAND AND WALES</b>		
1. West Cornwall (with Scilly)	Steve Jones	Herland Bungalow, Godolphin Cross, Helston, Cornwall, TR13 9RL. E-mail: Aparthenope@aol.com
2. East Cornwall	Steve Jones	
3. South Devon	Dave Smallshire	8 Twindle Beer, Chudleigh, Newton Abbot, TQ13 0JP. Tel: 01626 853393, E-mail: davesmall@supsanet.com
4. North Devon	Dave Smallshire	
5. South Somerset	Chris Iles	Honeysuckle House, 45 Blackberry Way, Midsomer Norton, Somerset BA3 2RN Email: kifill22@hotmail.com Tel: 01761 414798
6. North Somerset	Ted Waring	7 Amberlands Close, Backwell, Bristol, BS48 3LW. Tel: 01275 462 847
7. North Wiltshire	Steve Covey	130, White Edge Moor, Liden, Swindon, Wilts, SN3 6LY. Tel: 01793 349040, E-mail: steve.covey@ntlworld.com
8. South Wiltshire	Steve Covey	
9. Dorset	Andrew Brown	20 Madison Avenue, Bournemouth, BH1 4NU Tel: 07891 573267 Email: brown_a_r@yahoo.co.uk
10. Isle of Wight	Elaine Rice	25 Bannock Road, Whitwell, Isle of Wight, PO38 2RD. Tel: 01983 730187 E-mail: erice73737@aol.com
11. South Hampshire	Peter Allen	Hackers, Martin, Fordingbridge, Hants, SP6 3LA. Tel: 01725 519 269, E-mail: allenbds@waitrose.com
12. North Hampshire	Peter Allen	
13. West Sussex	Penny Green	Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Shoreham Rd, Henfield, Sussex BN5 9SD, Tel: 01273 497521 Email: pennygreen@sussexwt.org.uk
14. East Sussex	Penny Green	
15. East Kent	John & Gill Brook	1 Barrack Cottages, Lower Street, Broomfield, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1PU. Tel: 01622 862227
16. West Kent	John & Gill Brook	
17. Surrey	Alistair Kirk	alistair.kirk@surreywt.org.uk
18. South Essex	Ted Benton	13 Priory Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2PY. Tel: 01206 86732, E-mail: tbenton@essex.ac.uk
19. North Essex	Ted Benton	
20. Hertfordshire	Roy Woodward	62c High Street, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN8 0AH. Tel: 07855 567332. Email: roy.rkwoodward@ntlworld.com
21. Middlesex	Position vacant	Send records to Steve Prentice, Dragonflies in Focus Officer
22. Berkshire	Mike Turton	7 Fawcett Crescent, Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 3HX. E-mail: berksdragonflies@tiscali.co.uk
23. Oxfordshire	Anthony Brownett	28 Colesbourne Road, Brookside, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxon, OX15 4TB. E-mail: ab@brooksidebooks.co.uk
24. Buckinghamshire	Alan Nelson	74 Holland Way, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK16 0LW. E-mail: bucksdragonflies@googlemail.com
25. East Suffolk	Adrian Parr	10 Orchard Way, Barrow, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 5BX. Tel: 01284 810 465. E-mail: adrian.parr@btinternet.com
26. West Suffolk	Adrian Parr	
27. East Norfolk	Pam Taylor	Decoy Farm, Decoy Rd, Potter Heigham, Norfolk, NR29 5LX. Tel: 01692 670 311. E-mail: BDSPamTaylor@dragonflysoc.org.uk
28. West Norfolk	Pam Taylor	
29. Cambridgeshire	Val Perrin	13, Pettitts Lane, Dry Drayton, Cambs, CB3 8BT. Tel/Fax: 01954 780467, E-mail: valperrin@aol.com
30. Bedfordshire	David Anderson	88 Eastmoor Park, Harpenden. AL5 1BP. Tel. 01582 712604. E-mail: dragonflies@bnhs.org.uk
31. Huntingdonshire	Val Perrin	See VC 29 above
32. Northamptonshire	Mark Tyrrell	8 Warwick Close, Raunds, Wellingborough, Northants, NN9 6JH. Tel: 01933 389 748, E-mail: mark.p.tyrrell@ntlworld.com
33. E. Gloucestershire	Ingrid Twissell	Arfonia, The Green, Churchdown, Glos., GL3 2LE. Tel: 01452 714413, E-mail: canditwissell@btinternet.com
34. W. Gloucestershire	Ingrid Twissell	
35. Monmouthshire	Ian Smith	Larus, 1 Hook Close, Osbaston, Monmouth, Gwent, NP25 3BD. E-mail: welshdragonflies@googlemail.com
36. Herefordshire	Peter Garner	233 West Malvern Road, West Malvern, WR14 4BE. Tel: 01684 564 957, E-mail:
37. Worcestershire	Mike Averill	49 James Road, Kidderminster, Worcs, DY10 2TR. Tel: 01562 638571, E-mail: mike.averill@blueyonder.co.uk
38. Warwickshire	Peter Reeve	The Outspan, Leamington Hastings, nr. Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 8DZ. Tel: 01926 632 400, E-mail: peter@reeve60.uklinux.net
39. Staffordshire	Dave Skingsley	136 Crewe Road, Alsager, Cheshire ST7 2JA Tel: E-mail: bugbotherer@gmail.com
40. Shropshire	Ian Cheeseborough	ian.cheeseborough@yahoo.co.uk





41. Glamorgan <sup>1</sup>	Mike Powell	87 Coed Glas Road, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5EL. Tel: 029 2076 2182 E-mail: mike.powell2@coorsbrewers.com
42. Breconshire <sup>1</sup>	Keith Noble	25 Belle Vue Gardens, Brecon, LD3 7NY, Tel: 01874 620133, E-mail: knoble.kn@btinternet.com
43. Radnorshire <sup>1</sup>	Bob Dennison	Maes y Geidfa, Crossgates, LLandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 6RP. Tel: 01597 851 702. E-mail: rd19366@googlegmail.com
44. Carmarthenshire <sup>1</sup>	Stephen Coker	Mountain Grove, Clarboston Road, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA63 4SG Tel: 01437 563 566 E-mail: stephenandanne.coker@virgin.net
45. Pembrokeshire <sup>1</sup>	Stephen Coker	
46. Cardiganshire <sup>1</sup>	Lin Gander	Penwalk Llechryd, Cardigan Ceredigion, SA43 2PS. Tel: 01239 682405 E-mail: lingander@strandings.demon.co.uk
47. Montgomeryshire <sup>1</sup>	Position vacant	Send records to Steve Prentice, Dragonflies in Focus Officer
48. Merionethshire <sup>1</sup>	Allan Brandon	Bryn Heilyn, Rowen, Conwy LL32 8YT. Phone 01492 651 066, E-mail: Allan@rowenconwy.wanadoo.co.uk
49. Caernarvonshire <sup>1</sup>	Allan Brandon	
50. Denbighshire <sup>1</sup>	Allan Brandon	
51. Flintshire <sup>1</sup>	Allan Brandon	
52. Anglesey <sup>1</sup>	Allan Brandon	
53. South Lincolnshire	Nick Tribe/Richard Chadd	Nick Tribe, 12 Little Bargate Street, Lincoln, LN5 8JR Tel: 01522 822069 E-mail: nick.tribe@ntlworld.com
54. North Lincolnshire	Nick Tribe/Richard Chadd	
55. Leicestershire (with Rutland)	Ian Merrill	125 Church Lane, Whitwick, Coalville, Leicestershire. LE67 5DP . Tel: 01530 815886, E-mail: i.merrill@btopenworld.com
56. Nottinghamshire	Dave Goddard	30 Cliffe Hill Avenue, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 7HD; E-mail: david.goddard8@ntlworld.com
57. Derbyshire	Dave Goddard	
58. Cheshire	David Kitching	84, Broken Cross, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 8TZ. Tel: 01625 423249, E-mail: davidk@broccross.co.uk Also online: www.broccross.com
59. South Lancashire	Steve White/Graham Jones	Tel: 077860 14522 Email: gra_ham_jones@yahoo.co.uk Email: stevewhite102@btinternet.com . Tel: 01519203769 (daytime).
60. West Lancashire	Steve White	
61. South-east Yorkshire	Paul Ashton	4 St Aiden Close, Market Weighton, E.Yorks, YO43 3HE. E-mail: vc61@erdragonflies.co.uk , Website: www.erdragonflies.co.uk
62. North-east Yorkshire	Keith Gittens	Newstead Cottage, Thirsk Road, Easingwold, North Yorks, YO61 3NH. Tel: 01347 824480. E-mail: keith@brilliantemerald.wanadoo.co.uk
63. South-west Yorkshire	Tom Hubball	4 South View Terrace, Silsden, W.Yorks, BD20 0AS. Tel: 01535 678334, Email: vc63dragonfly@blueyonder.co.uk
64. Mid-west Yorkshire	Helen Dinsdale	2 Cartmel Lane, Steeton, Keighley, West Yorks BD20 6QL. Tel: 01535 653041. E-mail: bds64recorder@blueyonder.co.uk
65. North-west Yorkshire	Tom Hubball	See VC63
66. Durham	Harry Eales	11 Ennerdale Terrace, Low Westwood, Derwentside, Co. Durham NE17 7PN. Tel: 01207 560732, E-mail: harryeales@talktalk.net
67. S. Northumberland	Harry Eales	
68. N. Northumberland	Harry Eales	
69. Westmorland	David Clarke	Burnfoot, Cumwhitton, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 9EX. Tel: 01228 560117, E-mail: david.clarke19@virgin.net
70. Cumberland	David Clarke	
71. Isle of Man	Position vacant	Send records to Steve Prentice, Dragonflies in Focus Officer
<b>SCOTLAND</b>		
From 72. Dumfriesshire to 112. Shetland Islands	All records to Pat Batty	Kirnan Farm, Kilmichael Glen, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8QL. Tel: 01546 605 316, E-mail: dragonfly.batty@gmail.com
113. Channel Isles	Julian Medland	Clyne, Rue de la Ronde Cheminée, Castel, Guernsey, GY5 7GE. Tel: 01481 255 411, Email: medland@cwgsy.net
<b>NORTHERN IRELAND and EIRE</b>	All records to Brian Nelson	Invertebrate Ecologist, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government, 7 Ely Place DUBLIN 2. Tel: +353(0)18883294 Email: Brian.nelson@environ.ie
<b>Migrant Dragonfly Project</b>	Adrian Parr	10 Orchard Way, Barrow, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 5BX. Tel: 01284 810 465. E-mail: adrian.parr@btinternet.com



<sup>1</sup> a lot of changes have occurred in the names and mapped borders of Welsh counties in recent years. If you are unsure of which vice county you have records for please send them to Ian Smith (Monmouthshire) who will then forward them to the relevant recorder.

Any amendments or corrections to your contact details? Please contact Steve Prentice  
stephen.prentice@naturalengland.org.uk