

Why Conserve Dragonflies?

Dragonflies play an important role in many ecosystems. Their larvae predate other aquatic invertebrates, and are an important food source for animals, like amphibians. As adults, Dragonflies eat other flying insects, but are prey for birds, such as the Hobby.

Dragonflies also have a significant place in cultures across the world, and many people take pleasure in watching and studying them.



Sadly, at least a third of our British species are considered to be rare and threatened. The British Dragonfly Society believes it is our responsibility to protect both Dragonflies and their wetland habitats.

For more information visit

www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

Image credits: Front Cover, Derek Parker; Cordulagomphus fossil, H. Zell; river, C. Daguet; Broad-bodied Chaser, C. Jackson; Southern Damselfly, H. Conceição; White-faced Darter, L. B. Tettenborn. Charity Number: 1168300 (England and Wales), SC049416 (Scotland).



The Life and Times of Dragonflies

Ancient Origins



Dragonflies evolved over 300 million years ago. Their ancestors included 'Griffinflies', some of which had wingspans over 70cm!

~ Cordulagomphus fossil, an extinct type of Dragonfly from the Cretaceous period.

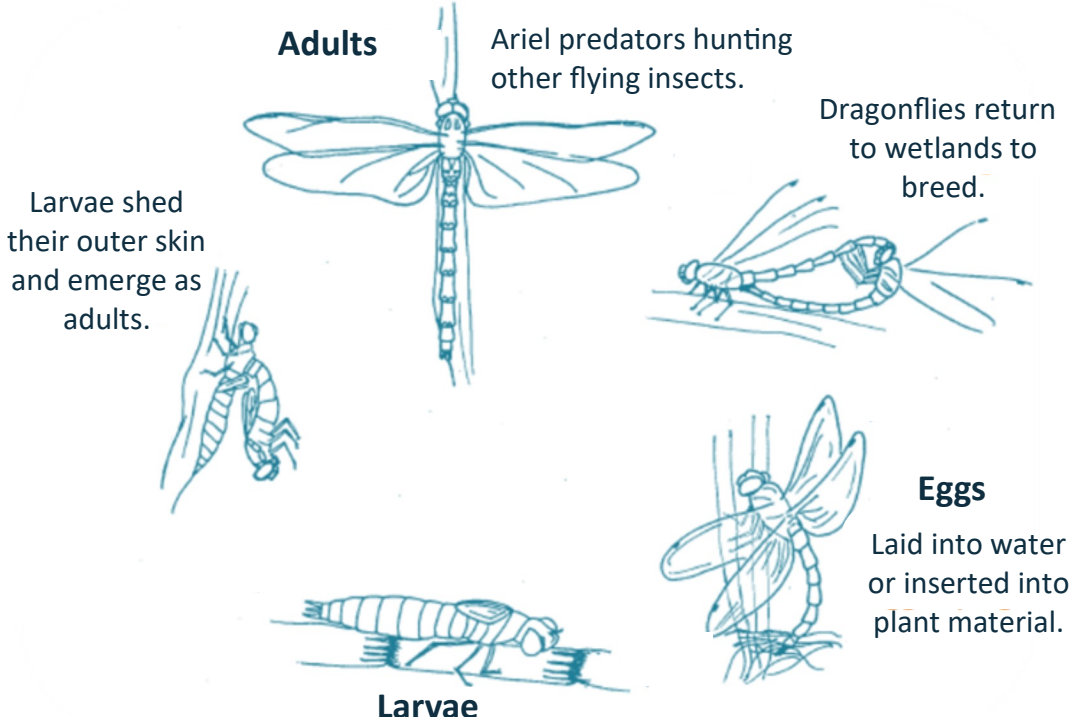
Dragonflies in Britain

46 species of Dragonfly breed, or are regular migrants, to Britain. Different species of Dragonfly breed in different types of wetland habitats, ranging from ponds and lakes, to canals, rivers, ditches, and even bogs. You may also encounter adult dragonflies hunting in woodland glades and rides, hedgerows and grassy meadows.

The greatest threats to Dragonflies in Britain are changes to their habitat caused by climate change and human activity. Most of our freshwater wetlands have already been drained and destroyed, or degraded by pollution and inappropriate management.

The Life Cycle

Dragonflies are **hemimetabolous**, which means they have a three stage life cycle, unlike Butterflies which also have a pupal stage.



Odonata

The insect **Order Odonata** (Dragonflies) includes **Anisoptera** ('true' Dragonflies) and **Zygoptera** (Damselflies).

How to identify. . .

Dragonflies are large, robust, powerful fliers. The head is spherical and consists almost entirely of a huge pair of eyes. The front and back wings are dissimilar in shape and these are normally held open whilst the Dragonfly is at rest.



Broad-bodied Chaser

Damselflies are delicate, slender insects with a weak, fluttering flight. The head is rectangular, with the eyes on either end. The front and back wings are the same shape and these are normally held closed along the abdomen when the damselfly is at rest.



Southern Damselfly