

## Did you know?

Dragonflies spend most of their life underwater & only live for a few weeks as an adult.

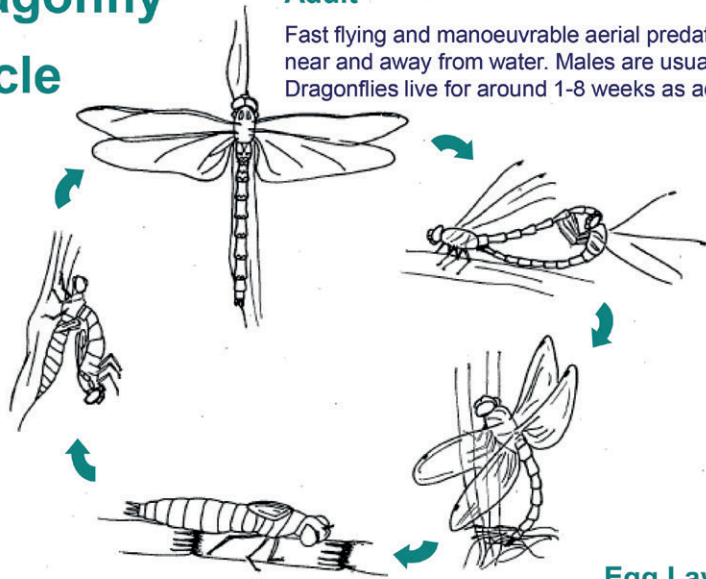
# The Dragonfly Life Cycle

## Adult

Fast flying and manoeuvrable aerial predators, seen both near and away from water. Males are usually territorial. Dragonflies live for around 1-8 weeks as adults.

## Emergence

Larvae climb out of water usually on plant stems and emerge from the larval skin to become an adult. The process takes several hours, and it will be a few days before the adult is fully dried and coloured up.



## Mating

Takes place in the 'wheel' formation. Male clasps female behind the head and she brings her abdomen up to meet him. May take a few minutes or several hours.

## Larva

The main life stage, the aquatic larva lives underwater for between 3 months and 5 years, although usually 2-3 years. Voracious predators, they shed their skin up to 18 times as they grow. Found in almost all wetland habitats.

## Egg Laying

Females may egg lay alone or 'in tandem', with the male still holding her. Some release eggs freely into the water, others insert them into plant material.

Look in vegetation surrounding ponds for exuviae, which are the skins that are left behind when an adult dragonfly emerges from its larval skin. Heron Pond is a good location for finding Common Hawker exuviae. Remember to be very careful around water and always wash your hands afterwards.

You can help dragonflies in a number of ways. Let us know where you see them, manage your garden for wildlife and if you have enough space in your garden, a pond will attract a number of different species. There is lots of info on the BDS website [www.british-dragonflies.org.uk](http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk)

Crombie contact - 01241 860360, [crombiepark@angus.gov.uk](mailto:crombiepark@angus.gov.uk)  
<https://archive.angus.gov.uk/leisure/rangerservice/crombie.htm>



# Dragons and Damsels of Crombie

Crombie Country Park is a Hotspot for Dragonflies and Damselflies, collectively called dragonflies. On a sunny day you are almost guaranteed to spot them zipping around Peddieston and Heron ponds feeding on other insects and looking for a mate.



**Common Hawkers** are the largest dragonflies at Crombie. The male looks very big and blue when he flies round the pond patrolling his territory - Peddieston Ponds are the best places to see Common Hawkers and if you are lucky, you might see a female laying her eggs. This is called ovipositing. Both males and females have a beautiful golden edge on the front of their wings.

Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_

Damselflies are matchstick-sized; dragonflies are bigger, and stronger flyers. Dragonflies' eyes meet and damselflies' eyes are found on the sides of their head. At rest dragonflies hold their wings out to the side while damselflies hold them over their body.



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# How many of these species can you spot in the park?



Write the numbers on this leaflet, then let us know online at [www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/submit-records](http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/submit-records)

The **Emerald Damselfly** has a bright green body and powder blue markings at the ends of its body. It holds its wings half open when perching and can be spotted in the pond-side vegetation.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



The **Common Blue Damselfly** is one of the commoner species in the park. Look for the 2 bright blue bands near the end of the 'tail' and a black mushroom or club shape at the top of the 'tail'.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



The male **Common Darter** dragonfly is bright red and likes to sunbathe on light coloured objects, so look for them on the boardwalks and pale stones close to the ponds on a sunny day. You may also see them pointing their 'tail' in the air to warm up or cool down.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



The male **Black Darter** is a small dragonfly that is black when fully mature but has a varying amount of yellow colouration initially. He has black legs and a pinched waist which is quite distinctive.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



The **Blue-tailed Damselfly** has a dark 'tail' with blue on the penultimate section near the tip. This species can fly when it is quite cool, unlike many other dragonflies.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



The **Azure Damselfly** initially looks similar to the Common Blue, but has a black 'Honda' logo at the top of the 'tail', where the Common Blue has a mushroom/ club shape. Azure damselflies also have thinner blue lines on their thorax, the area behind their eyes.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



The **Large Red Damselfly** is the only red damselfly in the park so easy to ID! Don't mix it up with the Common Darter Dragonfly though!  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_



**Four-spotted Chaser** dragonflies are brown and black with 4 dark markings on each pair of wings (in the middle of the top edge and at the tips) and dark wing bases. Males and females look very similar. They fly early in the summer, emerging in June. Look for them perching on tall sticks or plants coming out of the water.  
Number seen: \_\_\_\_\_

The photos and descriptions are of male dragonflies. The photos do not show the actual sizes of the dragonflies and damselflies.

Photo credits: Brian Walker - Blue-tailed Damselfly; Daniele Muir - female Common Hawker Dragonfly; David Kitching - Common Blue Damselfly and male Common Hawker Dragonfly; Denis Kennedy - Azure Damselfly, Emerald Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly, Four-spotted Chaser, Common Darter, Black Darter and exuvia. The BDS is a registered charity. Charity number 800196.