

## What to record

When you spot a dragonfly you need to note down the following:

1. Location name
2. Grid reference (this can be found out later when reporting the sighting)
3. Date
4. Species

## Record your sightings here:

Location	Location
Grid ref.	Grid ref.
Date	Date
Species	Species

  

Location	Location
Grid ref.	Grid ref.
Date	Date
Species	Species

## Report your sightings

Simply visit the BDS website and click on the Submit your records page to add your sighting into our iRecord database.

**[www.british-dragonflies.org.uk](http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk)**

Image credits: Front Cover Norfolk Hawker, Paul Ritchie; Migrant Hawker, David Kitching; Blue-tailed Damselfly, Gareth William Tonks.  
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Beginner's guide to recording  
**Dragonflies**

## Where to find dragonflies

Dragonflies breed in a variety of freshwater wetlands, ranging from urban ponds to upland bogs, depending on the species. While these are the best places to go looking for dragonflies you may also encounter adults away from the water, such as in long grass or woodland glades, where they may be hunting or seeking refuge.

The best time of year to see adult dragonflies is between May and September, although different species have different flight periods during these months.

Dragonflies are most active when the weather is dry, calm and sunny so these are the best conditions to see them in.

## Useful equipment

Mid-range **binoculars** (e.g. 8x32mm), or close focusing binoculars (e.g. 6.5x21mm), can both be useful when identifying dragonflies in the field. A number of great **dragonfly identification field guides** are available, which you can buy from the BDS online shop.

You will also need **writing material** to take note of your sightings with, and a **GPS** (or GPS phone app) can be useful in identifying the exact location of your sighting.

## Tips for identifying a species

When trying to identify a dragonfly trying working through the following questions to narrow down the list of potential candidates:

### 1. Is it a Dragonfly or a Damselfly?

#### **Damselflies. . .**

have a weak, fluttering flight  
usually rests with wings held together  
have small eyes separate on the head  
are small, delicate and thin body.



**Blue-tailed Damselfly**



**Migrant Hawker**

#### **Dragonflies. . .**

have a strong, direct flight  
usually rest with wings held open  
have large eyes that usually touch  
are larger and more robust.

### 2. What time of year is it?

Different species are in flight at different times of year. For example, adult Norfolk Hawker (*Anaciaeschna isosceles*) are usually only seen in June and July while the Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*) is usually in flight from August to October.

### 3. Where was it found?

Some species are widespread across the UK while others are more localised. For example, Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) is can easily found across Britain but the Northern Damselfly (*Coenagrion hastulatum*) is restricted to a few locations in the Highlands. Britain also experience influxes of migratory species as well as rarer vagrants such as the Vagrant Emperor (*Anax ephippiger*), which has been recorded at scattered locations across Britain.

### 4. What habitat was it found in?

Some species are found in a variety of freshwater habitats, such as the Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*), while others are more specialised, such as the White-faced Darter (*Leucorrhinia dubia*) which only utilises bog pools with floating bog moss for breeding.