

Hairy Damselfly © Ouwesok

British
Dragonfly
Society



2020 Scotland
Country Dragonfly
Recorder Reports

Scotland ~ by Pat Batty

In Scotland it was exceptionally warm and sunny during lockdown resulting in a number of dragonfly records from garden ponds and people's local area. One very interesting sighting was of a **Northern Emerald** in a garden near Grantown. A new breeding site was then discovered in a mire nearby.

Large Red Damselfly was first reported on 25 April, **Azure Damselfly** on 14 May and the **Four-spotted Chaser** on 15 May, similar dates to 2019. The **Four-spotted Chaser** was observed preying on the rare Chequered Skipper butterfly on a butterfly transect in Argyll which unfortunately had an impact on numbers.

An early **Hairy Dragonfly** was seen on 5 May in Argyll. Several new breeding sites were discovered in Argyll near Oban and Lochgilphead. Unusually, a larva was found at 234m above sea level, at Loch Chrion-doire, an upland loch above Loch Awe. This seems quite high for the species. It is not clear if the species is spreading or just under recorded. The **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** was recorded from 20 May to 17 September.

In Argyll, Ardnamurchan, Islay and Mull there were a number of new sightings of the Keeled **Skimmer** and the **Beautiful Demoiselle**. These were flying from 8 June – 9 August and 31 May – 9 August respectively. The Knapdale beavers have now created a large wetland on one of the burns. The **Beautiful Demoiselle** is still present here in smaller numbers on the affected sections with adults congregating where the water runs faster over the dam. Interestingly the **Hairy Dragonfly** has moved into the area and a male was patrolling the newly created ditches.

The **Banded Demoiselle** is expanding in south-east Scotland, mainly from the Borders to Edinburgh with the northernmost record from Fife on the coastal path near Crail. Adults were recorded from 31 May to 18 August,

The wet winter filled the bog pools in the west though many dry out after prolonged periods without rain. Some bogs in the east haven't fully recovered from the dry summer of 2018. The **White-faced Darter** was recorded from the north-west, Affric, Abernethy and Mid Argyll. There were new sites in Glen Carron and on Rannoch Moor. Adults were seen from 30 May to 16 July. In September pools in the Affric area were drying out and filled up with a lot of gunge, however larvae of **White-faced Darter** were surviving in them.

With restricted travel the few records for **Azure Hawker** were from locals at Beinn Eighe and Kinlochewe. It was recorded from one new hectad near Inverness. Larvae were found in several new pools on Rannoch moor.

The **Northern Emerald** was seen at Flanders Moss on 12 June, and other scattered sightings were throughout Scotland from Mull and mainland Argyll, Strath Spey, Glen Affric, Loch Carron and the Loch Maree area.

Despite poor weather hampering survey work after lockdown, the **Brilliant Emerald** was found at three new sites. Its known range is now from East Loch Ness, Glen Affric and then northwards to near Beaully and in the Loch Awe area of Argyll. Larvae were found at a number of sites. In Scotland it usually breeds in hill lochs but larvae were discovered this year amongst tussock sedge, under willow, at a loch only 38m above sea level in Argyll. Surprisingly, they were in the same area as **Hairy Dragonfly** larvae. **Brilliant Emerald** was on the wing from 18 June. There were few records for the **Downy Emerald** this year.

Northern Damselfly had few general sightings this year, the earliest was 18 June at Logierait in Perthshire. A survey was carried out in October/November to assess the viability of known sites which will be reported on by Stephen Corcoran.

The **Azure Damselfly** was flying from 10 May to 20 August with a spread of records in southern Scotland, Perthshire and Angus. Two new sites were discovered for **Variable Damselfly**, at Castle Douglas in Dumfries and Seil in Argyll. The **Emerald Damselfly** was recorded throughout Scotland from 25 June to 21 October.

The **Black Darter** is fairly widespread in Scotland, flying from 25 June to 23 October, and the **Common Darter** is even more widespread, recorded from 20 June to 4 November.

Each year there is an expansion of the range of the **Southern Hawker**. From 2000 onwards it is known from more than 173 hectads, compared with only 22 pre-2000. Emergence was photographed exceptionally early on 14 June and then observed on several occasions through to 30 June at Portmahomack near Tain. Most sightings were later in the year, until 14 October. There were new sites from the Lothians, Borders, Stirlingshire, Inverness-shire northwards to Brora in Sutherland.

Emergence of the **Common Hawker** was very early, starting on 6 June, and sightings continued to the 23 October throughout Scotland, with breeding records from upland pools to garden ponds. Emergence continues to get earlier each year merging with the flight time for the **Azure Hawker**.

There are now annual records for the **Migrant Hawker**. In 2020 it was seen on 8 August at Rockcliffe south of Dumfries, in Ayrshire and at Seton near Edinburgh from 17 September. Here there was a big influx of over eight males on 19 September and was seen until 8 October. There was the first record from the Isle of Arran on 5 September.

The **Emperor Dragonfly**, having made a come-back in 2018, was recorded from more new sites in 2020. A larva was recorded in the Trossachs area, the first found in Scotland and in a new hectad. The first adult sighting was on 7 June in Kirkcudbrightshire and ovipositing was observed here on the 14 June, as well as at Seton near Edinburgh on 9 July, and at Newmains in the Borders on several occasions from 24 June to 12 August. Teneral adults were also seen here for the first time. The species was last recorded on 19 August at Seton. It was also recorded from near Thornhill in Dumfriesshire and Kirkconnell flow. New pools have been created at this site with bog restoration work.

The **Lesser Emperor** was recorded at Kirkconnell Flows near Dumfries on 9 and 10 August and 6 September. The **Brown Hawker**, a first for Scotland, was discovered at Strathclyde Country park near Hamilton on the 24 and 30 July.

The **Red-veined Darter** was recorded from Seton near Edinburgh on 9 July. The **Black-tailed Skimmer** was seen at Newmains on 12 and 13 July, and St Abbs from 7- 16 August. This is the first time since 2015 with the warm summer.

The **Broad-bodied Chaser** is also moving north into the Borders, seen at Eyemouth on 11 June and Kirk Yetholm on 19 July. Before this year there have been only occasional sightings from the Edinburgh area in 2017 and 2018. It was also found at a Garden Centre in Caithness on 13 June, probably brought in with plants.

In Scotland we continue to work with Forestry and Land Scotland, the RSPB, Scottish Wildlife Trust and National Trust for Scotland. Thanks again for the Butterfly Conservation Society for passing on dragonfly records. A huge thanks to the large number of recorders who have submitted over 4500 records in 2020.

Orkney VC111 ~ by Graeme Walker

2020 was a terrible year in many ways for us humans. However, for the vast majority of species in the county, it was business as usual, or possibly better than usual, with perhaps less habitat disturbance. The number of Odonata sightings was on par with the previous year, with a total of 188 records submitted, so although we all had more time to watch wildlife during lockdowns, we were perhaps restricted in our movements. Fortuitously, there was an increase in the number of recorders, up 46%, with 38 keen-eyed folk submitting records, and many new recorders sending in records from their gardens where they were obviously spending more time wildlife-watching.

Happily, there were also some highlights in Orkney for 2020. In the absence of indoor talks and field meetings, the local natural history society, the Orkney Field Club, organised a virtual garden bioblitz at the end of May. Whilst a little early for most of Orkney's odes, participants reported several sightings of **Large Red Damselflies**.

On 26 June, a **Red-veined Darter** was photographed on the island of Papa Westray by local resident David Roche. This was only the second record for the County and, at the time of writing, the most northerly record for the UK.

On the 21 of July, a **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** was rescued from a water butt on the island of Wyre. Not only was this the first record of the species on the island, it was also the first ever odonate record received from the island. Discussions with the finder hinted that there are also damsels present in the area, so hopefully this will be a new place to search in 2021, lockdowns permitting.

The range expansion of **Emerald Damselflies** continued in 2020 with the first sighting for the island of Graemsay by local resident Sian Thomas, who saw a male in a quarry pool on the 14 August. Expectations are now rising for the colonisation of West Mainland, with Stromness reservoir and the pools around Brinkie's Brae being likely sites.

[County Dragonfly Record Contact Details](#)

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