

BICTON COMMON

2017-2026: Probable Priority Site of National Importance

Acidic heathland pools, runnels and mire, with base-rich springs and mire.

Successful breeding population of Small Red Damselfly.

Last updated: 24/02/2025

Site: BICTON COMMON	1987-1996			1997-2006			2007-2016			2017-2026		
Grid ref.: SY040858	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other
	Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss	
<u>Damselflies</u>												
Beautiful Demoiselle			C			C	A		C			C
Banded Demoiselle												A
Emerald Damselfly												
White-legged Damselfly												
Large Red Damselfly	B	D	E	D	D	E	C	C	D	B	D	D
Blue-tailed Damselfly			A									
Scarce Blue-t Damselfly												
Common Blue Damselfly						A			C			B
Southern Damselfly												
Azure Damselfly		B	C			C			B		A	C
Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red Damselfly			A	B		D	A		B		A	B
<u>Dragonflies</u>												
Hairy Dragonfly												
Common Hawker												A
Norfolk Hawker												
Brown Hawker												
Southern Hawker									A			A
Migrant Hawker	A		C			B						A
Emperor Dragonfly									C			C
Lesser Emperor												
Vagrant Emperor												
Golden-ringed Dragonfly			C				A		B			C
Downy Emerald												
Broad-bodied Chaser			B			B	A	A	C	A	A	C
Scarce Chaser												
Four-spotted Chaser												A
Keeled Skimmer	B	C	E	C	C	D		B	D	B	C	E
Black-tailed Skimmer						B			C			B
Common Darter	B		C					A	C	A	A	C
Red-veined Darter												
Ruddy Darter												
Black Darter												+
Yellow-winged Darter												
Scarlet Darter												
Total species in category:	4	3	10	3	2	9	5	4	12	4	6	17

Bold underlined = nationally important species **Bold black = important species**

Succ = Successful breeding (exuvia(e) and/or larva(e) and/or pre-flight emergent and/or oviposition);

Poss = Possible breeding (copulating pair); Other = Adult(s) or unspecified.

Abundance codes: A=1; B=2-5; C=6-20; D=21-100; E=101-500; F=>500; + = no count.

Priority Species History

Small Red Damselfly – single males recorded in 1981 and 1995; 34 (5 newly-emerged) on 27/6/05; 32 (7 mating and 1 ovipositing) on 3/7/06; 3 on 6/7/07; smaller numbers during 2014-20, with breeding evidence in 2015 and 2017.

Other species of note

Keeled Skimmer – breeding abundantly throughout.

Common Hawker – 1 reported on 2/8/19.

Black Darter – reported on 2/8/19.

Habitat (from 1995 survey)

Two deeply incised fast flowing streams flowing through an area of wet heath with extensive areas of *Schoenus nigricans* mire, marking spring-lines (by 1995 had recovered well from burn in 1994), and two small reed beds. There is an area of floating bog with numerous runnels and several small pools formed where tracks cross the main stream. There are damper areas with *Eriophorum* and *Narthecium*, as well as some dry heath. pH generally 6.7-7.4, but 6.0-6.5 in northern tributary stream; locally 5.0-5.1 in the west of the area surveyed.

Status

SSSI; SAC (part), SPA.

Area

11 ha

Owner/tenant

Clinton Devon Estates.

Local Authority: East Devon DC

Threats

- Accidental fires – burnt accidentally spring 1994.
- Natural succession (scrub).
- Extensive use by Royal Marine Commandos, causing mud to be churned-up during exercises.

Management suggestions

- Maintain open nature of site, perhaps ideally by grazing.
- Controlled late-winter burns in small blocks, in planned rotation.
- Consider cattle grazing and runnel creation in *Schoenus* mire to produce potential Southern Damselfly habitat.

A hand-drawn map of Bickton Common, showing a route from the bottom left towards the top right. The map includes various geographical features and pH measurements.

Top Left: A north arrow pointing upwards and a scale bar labeled "0 metres 100 Scale".

Bottom Left: "Four Firs Crossroads" with an arrow pointing left to "Conifers" and right to "Yettinton". A "car park" is marked near the crossroads.

Route and Key Features:

- Route 6.2 28/7:** A dashed line representing the route.
- PH 5.1:** Located near "Hill mire", with associated plant life: *Eriophorum*, *Rhynchospora alba*, *Sphagnum*, and *Scirpus cespitosus*.
- PH 6.0:** Near a "dry leak" and "damp area".
- PH 6.2:** Near a "dry leak on hill".
- PH 6.5:** Near "Hypericum elodes PH 7.3".
- PH 6.8:** Near "Floating bog", "Runnels and pools", and "Rhynchospora alba, Eriophorum sp., Nottelium ossitragum".
- PH 7.1:** Near a "Submergence pool" and "muddy".
- PH 7.3:** Near a "Pool" and "18 Citrullum".
- PH 7.4:** Near a "dry leak up slope".
- PH 7.7:** Near a "very deep 1m + narrow 30cm main stream".
- PH 7.8:** Near a "Sagittaria" and "mixed wood".
- PH 7.0:** Near a "Drosera" and "Bare gravel".

Other Labels:

- "area heavily used by marines muddy no. veg."
- "some wooden"
- "Pines"
- "Reed bed"
- "Potamogeton pools"

BICTON common.

Bicton Common: 2005 survey map

