

BRAUNTON BURROWS

2017-2026: Confirmed Priority Site of Local Importance

A total of 21 ponds in sand dune system, some subject to regular desiccation. Successful breeding population of Ruddy Darter discovered in 2006 (but not since) and Hairy Dragonfly in 2019. Scarce Chaser present in 2023.

Last updated: 28/03/2025

Site: BRAUNTON BURROWS	1987-1996			1997-2006			2007-2016			2017-2026		
Grid ref.: SS4534 etc.	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other
	Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss	
<u>Damselflies</u>												
Beautiful Demoiselle			A									
Banded Demoiselle												
Emerald Damselfly	+	+	B	+	B	D		A	B	+		C
White-legged Damselfly												
Large Red Damselfly		+	C	+		+			D			A
Blue-tailed Damselfly		+	D	+	A	D	A		C		B	C
Scarce Blue-t Damselfly												
Common Blue Damselfly		+	D	C	D	D	A		C	+	+	D
Southern Damselfly												
Azure Damselfly				B	B	C			B	C		C
Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red Damselfly												
<u>Dragonflies</u>												
Hairy Dragonfly									A	A		A
Common Hawker			B									
Norfolk Hawker												
Brown Hawker												
Southern Hawker		+	C	+		A			A			B
Migrant Hawker			B			+			A			A
Emperor Dragonfly		+	D	B	B	C	B		C		B	C
Lesser Emperor												
Vagrant Emperor												
Golden-ringed Dragonfly			A									
Downy Emerald												
Broad-bodied Chaser		+	D	+		A		A	B			C
Scarce Chaser												B
Four-spotted Chaser	+	+	C	B	A	C	A		C	B		C
Keeled Skimmer			A									
Black-tailed Skimmer			A			C	B		B			C
Common Darter	+	+	C	B	A	C	B		D	A		C
Red-veined Darter												
Ruddy Darter				B	B	D						
Black Darter			B									
Yellow-winged Darter												
Scarlet Darter												
Total species in category:	3	9	16	11	8	13	6	2	13	6	3	13

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

Hairy Dragonfly – 1 on 6/5/14; 1 egg-laying on 18/5/19, with further sightings there in spring 2022, including a male on 17/5/22; 1 at Partridge Slack on 26/5/23.

Scarce Chaser – 4 ‘females’ in willow scrub next to dune slacks at SS46343471 – perhaps dispersing from Braunton Marsh.

Ruddy Darter – reported in 1979 (undated); a total of 34 on 17-18/7/06: 21 (including 4 pairs in tandem) were counted at D Lane Pond; 3 (including a pair ovipositing) at Lane Pond; a female at Sheep 1 Pond; 4 (including a pair ovipositing) at Snipe Pond; and 5 males at Venners Pond; 1 on 11/8/10.

Habitat

No natural ponds occur, though 31 ponds had been created by 2003. Wet dune slacks may be flooded in winter, but dry out and lose open water by early June, at the latest. The dune system is now drier than in the 1970s and 1980s. Four ponds were created during WWII during military training: Lamprey’s Pond (SS 456358, extended in 2003), 5 Ponds (SS452359, extended in 1999), Hog Wood (2 ponds at SS462343, extended in 2003) and Boardwalk Pond (SS455327, extended in 1983 and 2000). The remaining ponds were created steadily during 1974-2003, with extensions to most at intervals during deepening or scrub removal operations.

In 1995 there were 21 artificial ponds, two of which dry up early each summer, set in vast sand dune system. Most are small, the largest being about 0.2 ha. pH around neutral (influenced by shell sand). Some salt blows in on the wind. Submerged plants mostly *Chara*, locally *Elodea*. Some emergents (e.g. *Typha*) and some ponds fringed by scrub and rank grassland. Some ponds have had to be deepened on up to three occasions to keep pace with lowered water table.

Status

SAC (1339.74 ha), International Biosphere Reserve, National Nature Reserve (603 ha), SSSI (1356.7 ha).

Owner/tenant

Christie Estate Trustees.

Local Authority: North Devon DC

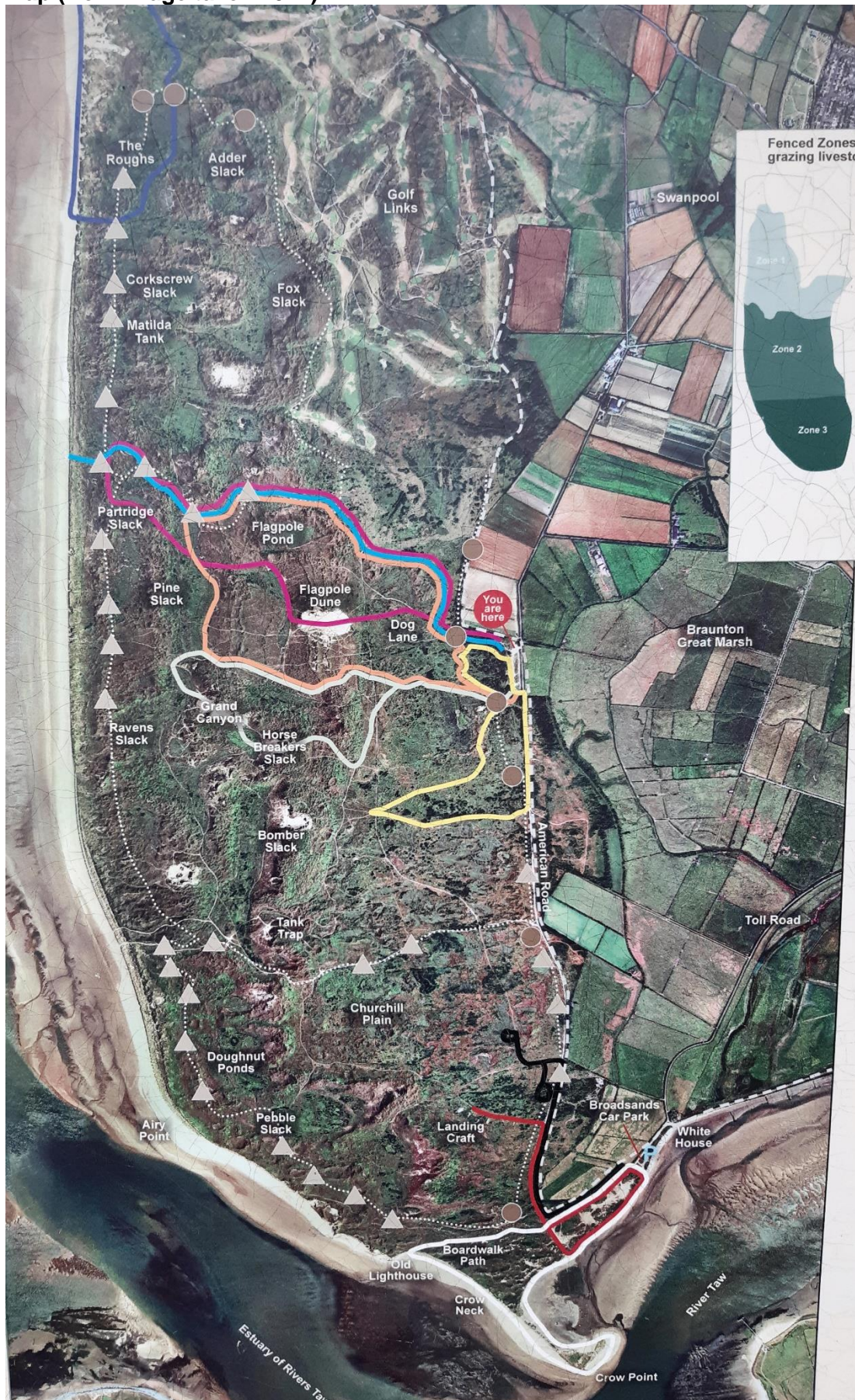
Threats

- The main threat is of ponds desiccating because of lowered water table, due to agricultural drainage on the adjacent marsh and, locally, increased transpiration because of adjacent scrub and rank grassland.

Management suggestions

- Management Plan for the whole system.
- Ideally introduce grazing to help control scrub and other rank vegetation; alternatively, cut rotationally to maintain open margins to ponds.
- Occasional rotational clearance to arrest succession within ponds.

Map (from image taken 2021)










Branton Burrows

Biosphere Nature Reserve

Scale 1:15000

Contours 5m

Symbols are drawn to the IOF map specification
ISOM 2000 with the following interpretations:

-  Seasonal water, uncrossable
-  Seasonal water, crossable
-  Fence stile crossing point
-  Metal object; flagpole (>5m)
-  Distinctive tree

MAG
N
ETIC
2010

0 250 500
metres

MILITARY AREA
Beware of suspicious
hardware

This map must not be used for
orienteering without the
permission of Devon Orienteering
Club and the landowner, Christie
Devon Estate Trust.

Reserve punch boxes

A	B	C

Based on the 2000 map by Brian Parker,
O-Maps of Dartmouth. Extensive update
survey 2009/10 by Brian Parker and John Pearce.
Updated 2012 by John Pearce using
OCAD 10 cartography.
BOF Map SW-10-604

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