

DECOY COUNTRY PARK

2017-2026: Confirmed Priority Site of Local Importance

Two old, flooded, Bovey Basin clay workings: Decoy Lake is very deep, Magazine Pond shallow. Both have breeding Red-eyed Damselfly; Hairy Dragonfly and Downy Emerald are likely to be breeding at both; presence of Scarce Chaser (2023 only).

Last updated: 28/03/2025

Site: DECOY COUNTRY PARK	1987-1996			1997-2006			2007-2016			2017-2026		
Grid ref.: SX865702	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other
	Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss	
<u>Damselflies</u>												
Beautiful Demoiselle			B			A			A			B
Banded Demoiselle			B									
Emerald Damselfly												
White-legged Damselfly												
Large Red Damselfly	B	B	D	B	B	D			C	A		B
Blue-tailed Damselfly	B	+	C		A	D			C		A	C
Scarce Blue-t Damselfly												
Common Blue Damselfly	C	C	D	C	C	D	B	C	E		B	E
Southern Damselfly												
Azure Damselfly	C	C	E	C	C	E	B		C	C	A	D
Red-eyed Damselfly	C	B	E	A	B	C	B	B	D	B		D
Small Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red Damselfly												
<u>Dragonflies</u>												
Hairy Dragonfly			B			A						B
Common Hawker												
Norfolk Hawker												
Brown Hawker												
Southern Hawker	+		+									B
Migrant Hawker			A									B
Emperor Dragonfly	A	+	B			B	A		B	A		C
Lesser Emperor												
Vagrant Emperor												
Golden-ringed Dragonfly		+	A									
Downy Emerald	+		B			B						A
Broad-bodied Chaser	A	A	B			A	A		B			B
Scarce Chaser												B
Four-spotted Chaser		+	+			B			B			C
Keeled Skimmer	+		+									
Black-tailed Skimmer	A	+	B		A	C			B	B	A	C
Common Darter		+	B	B					B			C
Red-veined Darter												
Ruddy Darter												
Black Darter												
Yellow-winged Darter												
Scarlet Darter												
Total species in category:	11	11	18	5	6	12	5	2	11	5	3	16

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

Red-eyed Damselfly - In 1990, there were ten at Decoy Lake and eight at Magazine Pond. In 1992, there were E adults (C ovipositing) at Decoy Lake and D adults (B ovipositing) at Magazine Pond. In 1993, C adults, B pairs *in cop.* and B ovipositing pairs were recorded. In 1995 up to five were seen, but on Decoy Lake only. At Decoy Lake, an exuvia was found on 13/5/05 and up to 12 were counted in June-July, while 1 was at Magazine Pond on 9/6/05; on 5/6/06 there were 19 at Decoy Lake, including 2 pairs mating; and 29 (with 2 mating pairs and 1 pair egg-laying) on 24/5/07. On 3/6/10 there were 20 (2 egg-laying) at Decoy Lake and 6 (1 egg-laying) at Magazine Pond. On 28/5/20, there were 24 (1 egg-laying) at Decoy Lake and 4 males at Magazine Pond. On 11/6/23, there were 37 (5 egg-laying) at Decoy Lake and 18 (1 in cop., 3 egg-laying). On 21/5/24, there were 48 at Decoy Lake and 8 at Magazine Pond.

Hairy Dragonfly - three (at least two males) on 6/6/93; 1 on 9/6/05. At Magazine Pond, 1 on 2/6/06. 1 male at Decoy Lake on 11/6/18. On 21/5/24, there were 3 territorial males, 1 at Decoy Lake and 2 at Magazine Pond.

Downy Emerald – egg-laying was reported in 1989; two territorial males were at Magazine Pond on 23/5/92; 2 territorial males around Decoy Lake on 2/6/95 and 1 on 5/6/05; 2 males plus a pair in cop. at Decoy Lake on 3/6/10. On 21/5/24, there was a territorial male at Magazine Pond.

Scarce Chaser – 3 males (1 with 'mating scars') at Decoy Lake on 11/6/23.

Other species of note

Keeled Skimmer - probably used to breed in the small acidic flush adjacent to Magazine Pond, where oviposition was recorded in 1989.

[**Black Darter** – reported egg-laying in 1989 (undated): probably a misidentification.]

Habitat (from 1995 report)

Both waters are set in the busy Decoy Country Park. Details below refer to 1995.

Decoy Lake: This old, very deep, clay-pit is used for boating/windsurfing and the public encourage large numbers of waterfowl and gulls by feeding them. Also limited angling. 95% of bank is lined by overhanging trees. Open bank includes slipway swims and two grassy areas. The western bank has very steep slopes and is fenced off (for safety purposes). There are occasional areas of marginal rushes plus a little *Phragmites* and *Iris* and a few stands of *Menyanthes trifoliata* in the north and north-east. There are fairly large rafts of *Nymphaea alba* along the eastern edge and frequent to abundant *Callitriche* and *Ceratophyllum* in the shallower margins. Water is clear. pH: 8.2 (23/5/92); 8.5 (2/6/95). Conductivity: 270 μ S/cm. (11/8/95).

Magazine Pond: Part of ex-clay working. 75% of bank and island is surrounded by scrub, overhanging in places. The north end has part-submerged, unhealthy/dead willows. There is a grassy/bare clay area at the south end used by Canada Geese, Mute Swans and Mallard, which are numerous here. Emergents and marginals are frequent, but nowhere dense: *Juncus*, *Phragmites* and *Typha*, with *Menyanthes* stands along the SE bank; some *Nymphaea* by the east bank. The water is completely clouded with suspended clay. This is reportedly a phenomenon of recent years (possibly exacerbated by wildfowl and silt-stirring fish?). Submerged vegetation and underwater bank profile not discernible. Boardwalk gives pond dipping access, but, reportedly, little is caught these days. Very occasionally fished by anglers. pH: 8.0 (23/5/92); 7.9-8.0 (2/6/95). Conductivity: 230, 250 μ S/cm (11/8/95).

Adjacent habitat includes a small *Sphagnum* flush and the completely tree-shaded 'Paul's Pond'; Wolborough Fen SSSI is nearby.

Status

Country Park, SSSI (part).

Area

4.8 ha.

Owner/tenant

Teignbridge District Council.

Local Authority: Teignbridge DC

Threats

- Clay suspension.
- Excessive fish and waterfowl populations.

Management suggestions***Decoy Lake:***

- Create occasional clearings on the edge of the lake (by coppicing regularly or felling) to encourage marginal vegetation, fencing out the public to prevent trampling.
- Encourage the growth of emergents by providing protection from waves (e.g. by erecting floating booms of logs).

Magazine Pond:

- The key to improving the pond may well lie with clearing the water of clay. Reduction in fish and wildfowl may help, or possibly the use of a chemical flocculant. [NB turbidity much improved in recent years.]

Decoy Lake and Magazine Pond (from 1995 survey)

