

# LOWER OTTER VALLEY

## 2017-2026: Possible Priority Site of Local Importance

Presence of White-legged Damselfly, Hairy Dragonfly and Scarce Chaser, and the only Devon record of Common Clubtail.

Last updated: 18/03/2025

Site: LOWER OTTER VALLEY	1987-1996			1997-2006			2007-2016			2017-2026		
Grid ref.: SY08-SY09	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other	Breeding		Other
	Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss	
<b><u>Damselflies</u></b>												
Beautiful Demoiselle			D						C	A		E
Banded Demoiselle			D		A	D			E	+	+	F
Emerald Damselfly												
<b>White-legged Damselfly</b>			<b>C</b>			<b>C</b>			<b>B</b>		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Large Red Damselfly			A	A	B	D			C	+	+	E
Blue-tailed Damselfly			D			D			B			C
<b>Scarce Blue-t Damselfly</b>												<b>C</b>
Common Blue Damselfly			D	A	A	D		A	B			D
<b>Southern Damselfly</b>												
Azure Damselfly			A	B	A	D	C		D	C	A	E
<b>Red-eyed Damselfly</b>												
Small Red-eyed Damselfly												
<b>Small Red Damselfly</b>												
<b><u>Dragonflies</u></b>												
<b>Hairy Dragonfly</b>						<b>C</b>			<b>B</b>			<b>A</b>
Common Hawker												
<b>Norfolk Hawker</b>												
Brown Hawker												
Southern Hawker			B	A		C			B			B
Migrant Hawker			B			D			C			C
Emperor Dragonfly			A	A		B			A	B		C
Lesser Emperor												A
Vagrant Emperor												
Common Clubtail												A
Golden-ringed Dragonfly				B		B			A	A		C
<b>Downy Emerald</b>												
Broad-bodied Chaser						B						B
<b>Scarce Chaser</b>												<b>A</b>
Four-spotted Chaser												
Keeled Skimmer												
Black-tailed Skimmer						B			B			
Common Darter	B	B	C	+		D			C		A	D
Red-veined Darter						A						
<b>Ruddy Darter</b>												
Black Darter												
Yellow-winged Darter												
Scarlet Darter												
<b>Total species in category:</b>	1	1	11	6	4	14	1	1	14	6	5	18

**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***

**White-legged Damselfly** – known from Newton Poppleford and Ottery St Mary from 1979 and 1981, respectively. Up to C (6-20) reported north of White Bridge (near the aqueduct, SY077840) in 1992-3 and 2006.

**Hairy Dragonfly** – 7 were noted along ditches north of White Bridge on 3/6/06, with 2 on 6/6/06 and B (2-5) on 10/6/07 and a male by the river on 30/6/18.

**Scarce Chaser** – a male was north of White Bridge at SY073838 on 30/6/18 and one was at the river near Cotley at SY09139307 on 28/6/21.

### ***Other species of note***

**Lesser Emperor** – a male was in Ottery St Mary on 18/7/17.

**Common Clubtail** – one by the river at Ottery St Mary at SY095945 on 18/7/17 – the only record for Devon (well out of normal range).

**Red-veined Darter** – a male was seen at SX091837 on 21/8/06.

### ***Habitat***

Lowland river from Ottery St Mary to the sea at Budleigh Salterton. In 2023, the lower section of the floodplain was made subject to tidal inundation through the Lower Otter Restoration Project, thereby rendering flooded sections unsuitable for dragonflies. Previously, Hairy Dragonfly probably bred and Scarce Chaser was present within the current LORP area.

### ***Status***

SSSI, part NNR.

### ***Area***

c14 km.

***Local Authority:*** East Devon DC

### ***Owner/tenant***

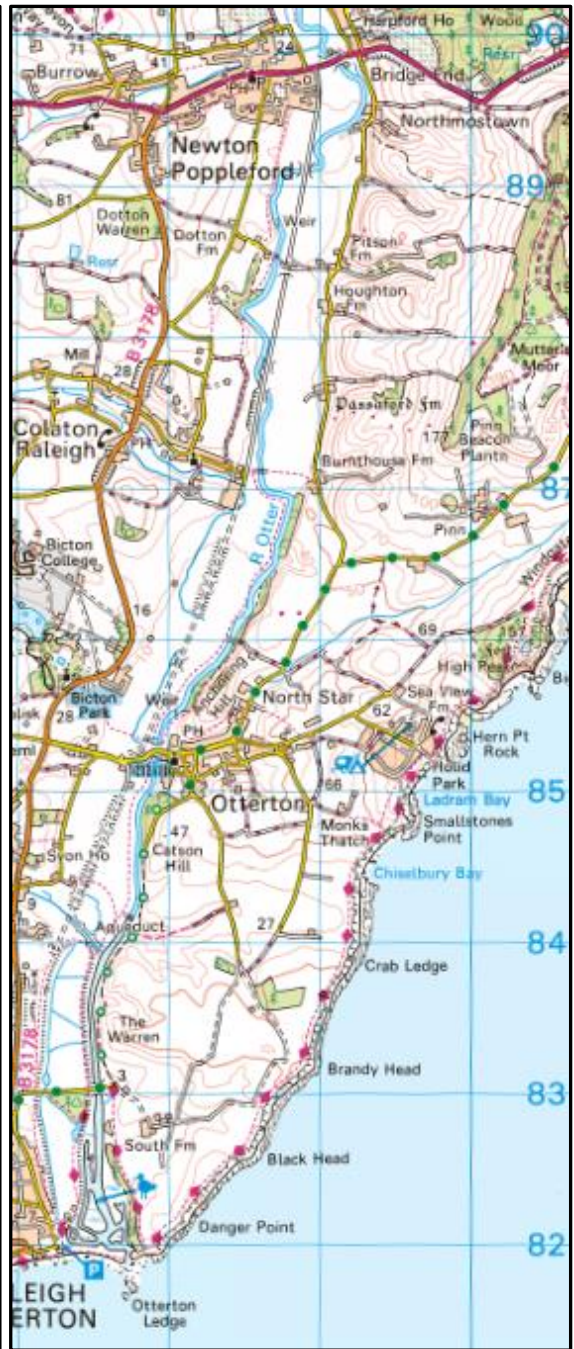
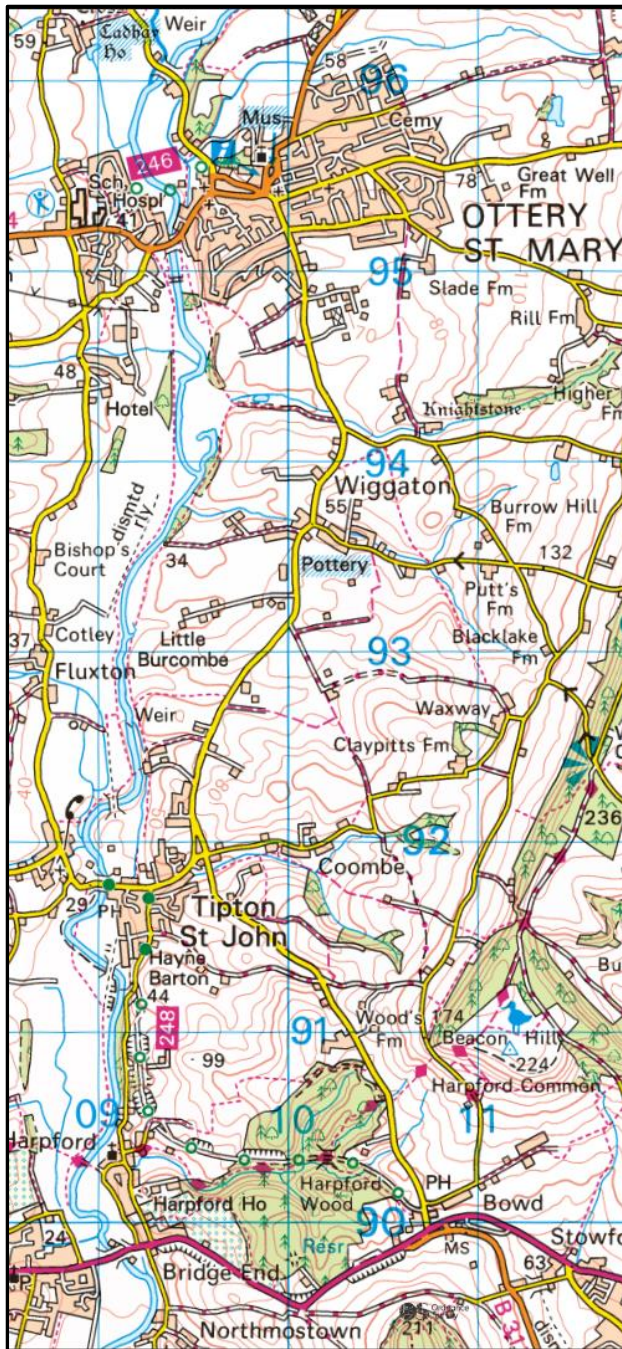
Clinton Devon Estates and various others.

### ***Threats***

- Pollution events.
- Saline intrusion.

### ***Management suggestions***

- Create new freshwater ponds.





**Lower Otter Valley prior to the Lower Otter Restoration Project.**

