

SEATON WETLANDS

2007-2016: Confirmed Priority Site of Local Importance

CURRENT STATUS UNCERTAIN

Comprises Seaton Marshes in the south, with Black Hole Marsh, Stafford Marsh and Colyford Common in the north. Coastal grazing marsh with ditch systems, ponds and tidal lagoon. Ruddy Darter found in 1995, breeding until 2006, after which the ditch was dredged; Red-eyed Damselfly probably breeding; presence of Scarce Chaser.

Last updated: 28/07/2025

Site: SEATON MARSHES	1987-1996			1997-2006			2007-2016			2017-2026		
Grid ref.: SY248906	Breeding		Other									
	Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss		Succ	Poss	
<u>Damselflies</u>												
Beautiful Demoiselle						B			B			B
Banded Demoiselle						B						
Emerald Damselfly						B						
<u>White-legged Damselfly</u>												
Large Red Damselfly			A			A			A			B
Blue-tailed Damselfly			A		E	E	C	B	E			D
<u>Scarce Blue-t Damselfly</u>												
Common Blue Damselfly			C	B	E	F			D			C
<u>Southern Damselfly</u>												
Azure Damselfly					E	E	C	B	D	B		D
<u>Red-eyed Damselfly</u>							A		C			
Small Red-eyed Damselfly							A		B		A	C
<u>Small Red Damselfly</u>												
<u>Dragonflies</u>												
<u>Hairy Dragonfly</u>												
Common Hawker						?						
<u>Norfolk Hawker</u>												
Brown Hawker												
Southern Hawker						C	A		B			B
Migrant Hawker	A	B	D			D			B			C
Emperor Dragonfly			A			C	A		B	B		B
Lesser Emperor												
Vagrant Emperor												
Golden-ringed Dragonfly			A			B						+
<u>Downy Emerald</u>												
Broad-bodied Chaser			A			C	B		C			
<u>Scarce Chaser</u>									A			
Four-spotted Chaser									B			A
Keeled Skimmer						A						
Black-tailed Skimmer						D			B			A
Common Darter	C		D	A	B	E	B		C		B	C
Red-veined Darter						A						
<u>Ruddy Darter</u>			B	A	A	C						
Black Darter												
Yellow-winged Darter												
Scarlet Darter												
Total species in category:	2	1	9	3	5	17	8	2	15	2	2	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

Red-eyed Damselfly – 12+ on 4/8/16, including 10+ in 'Ruddy Darter ditch' (1 egg-laying) and 2 on Borrow Pit.

Scarce Chaser – a male beside the 'Ruddy Darter ditch' by sewage works on 3/6/11; a male with 'mating scars' at the Borrow Pit on 11/7/25.

Ruddy Darter – two territorial males found along a ditch at SY247905 on 13/9/95; up to C (6-20) in August 2001; B (2-5) on 13/8/02; 1 on 12 & 25/8/05; and noted during 13-30/7/06, with c12 on 12th, including 1 in cop. and 1 egg-laying. None seen subsequently, after ditching operations; this was one of the few breeding sites in Devon.

Other species of interest

Small Red-eyed Damselfly – B (2-5) on Borrow Pit pool on 19/8/13; 6, including 1 egg-laying, at Visitor Centre pond on 31/8/18.

Red-veined Darter – 1 on 15/8/01.

[**Common Hawker** – C (6-20, with 1 egg-laying) reported on 28/8/01 is unlikely in this habitat and cannot be verified.]

Habitat (from 1995 survey)

Mainly improved/reverting grassland, mostly pasture, some with frequent/abundant *J. effusus*. Ditch systems eutrophic, with *S. maritimus* dominant in some, but mostly well grazed and poached at the margins (cattle and sheep in fields). Brackish/saline influence at E end of ditch system. Also in the area surveyed was a *S. maritimus*-fringed 'borrow pit' (where most of the Common Blue Damselflies were seen). Generally, the submerged flora in the area appeared poor (small patch of *Potamogeton crispus* noted in one ditch). Possibly some sewage effluent into system.

Black Hole Marsh was converted into a saline lagoon with regulated tidal exchange in 2009.

Status	Area
LNR.	c20 ha

Local Authority: East Devon DC

Owner/tenant

Managed by Wild East Devon on behalf of Axe Vale and District Conservation Society.

Threats

- Sewage effluent?
- Inappropriate ditch clearance regime.

Management suggestions

- Check water quality effluent from adjacent sewage works.
- Re-instate rotational ditch management.
- Consider providing more ditches and/or ponds.

Seaton Marshes (1995 survey map)



