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DRAGONFLY NEWS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR DRAGONFLY ENTHUSIASTS, SUPPORTERS AND CONSERVATIONISTS.



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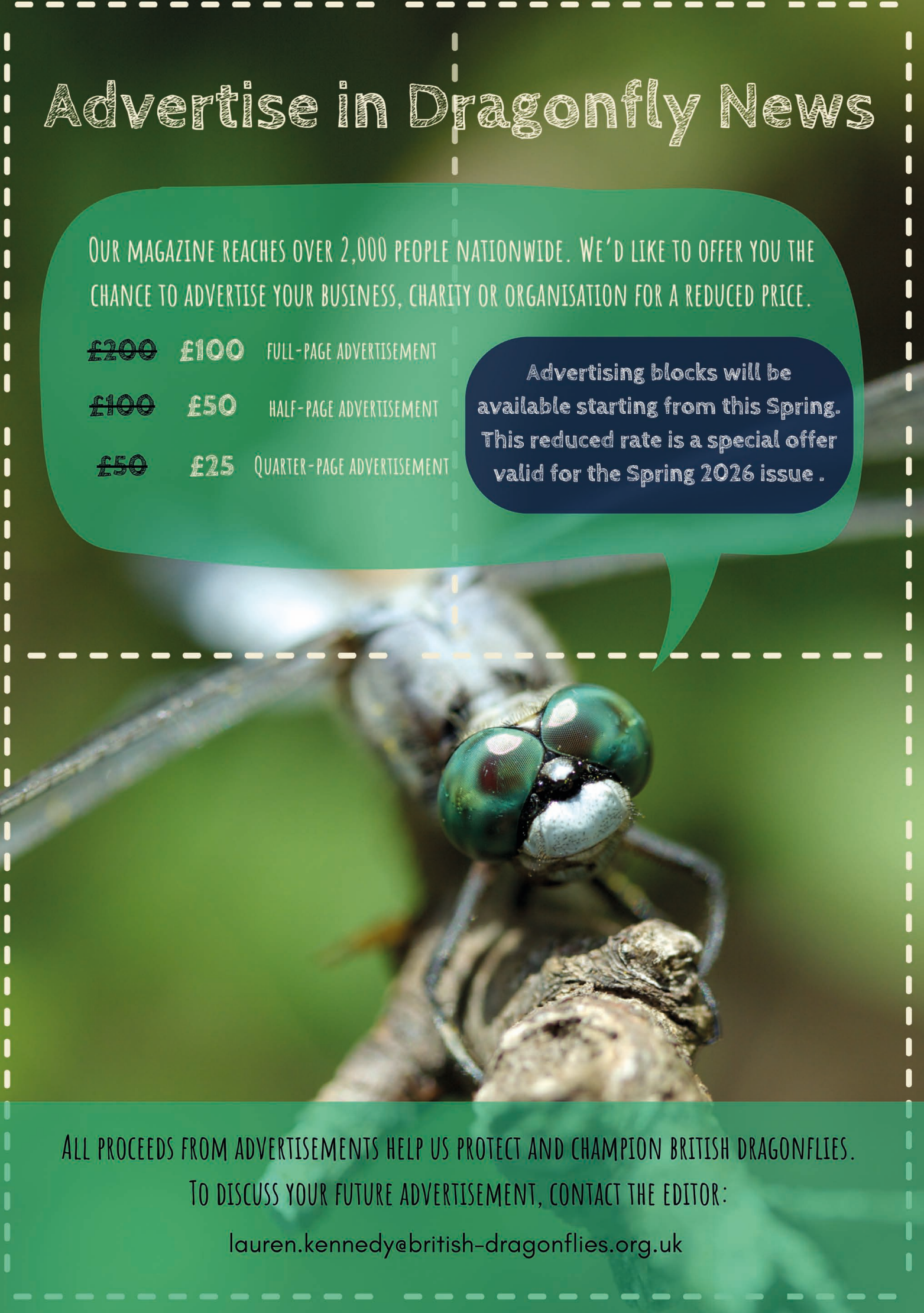

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DRAGONFLY NEWS
Published twice a year, in April and October, Dragonfly News dives into the fascinating lives of dragonflies and damselflies (known as Odonata to the experts). Each edition features the work that the British Dragonfly Society, including its staff team and fantastic army of volunteers, is doing to monitor, record, research, conserve, and raise awareness of these enchanting insects.

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WELCOME

ANOTHER DRAGONFLY SEASON IS COMING TO A CLOSE – WHAT HAVE TEAM DRAGONFLY BEEN UP TO?

This issue is full of updates from the year, which include the brilliant conservation work taking place in Scotland, our first Youth Panel summer trip, this year's photo competition, and lots of fascinating articles. This summer has seen exciting records of immigrant species and the continued spread of species such as the Norfolk Hawker.

Owing to rising costs the current issue of Dragonfly News will, unfortunately, be the last to be published in print format and future issues will be available digitally. Tim Coleshaw, Chair of Trustees, explains all in Dragonfly HQ on page 10.

Personally I am taking a brief interlude from my maternity leave to edit this issue of the magazine – it's brilliant to catch up on all the inspiring work completed by the brilliant BDS team and to read the articles that have been sent in. Thank you to all our magazine contributors.

Lauren Kennedy
Editor-in-Chief

Front cover image: Our 2025 photo competition winner by Daryl Hopcroft

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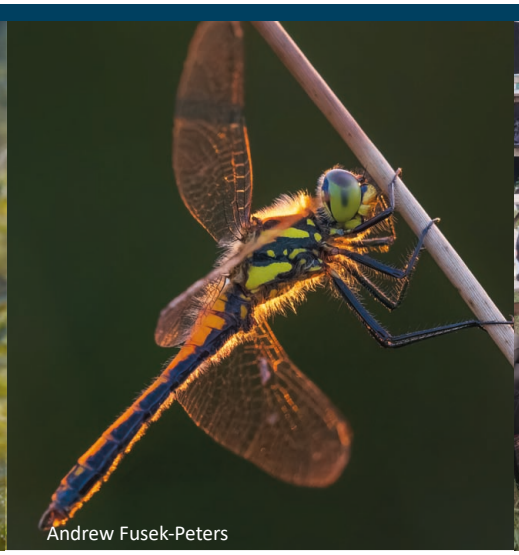
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This year we will be holding our AGM and conference as two separate online events, and we would love to see you there! Take a look at our line up of speakers and how to register for your place.

DRAGONFLIES AND YOU

You never know when you might catch a glimpse of the blue and green patterns of a hawker, witness bizarre dragonfly behaviour, or the dark dash of a Black Darter. But who better to capture a photo of a Beautiful Demoiselle or a mighty Emperor than you, our **dedicated members** and **supporters**?
These are just a few of the incredible photos you sent to us recently.



STAINED GLASS DRAGONFLY

Artist Anthony Greentree created a 3mx2m cardboard and bamboo dragonfly for the children's Art Week at Wembrook Primary School, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. The dragonfly is the logo for the school and Anthony used this as a basis for their pattern themes. Anthony facilitated and collected stained glass style art from each class and collated them together to form panels and also to decorate the framework on the dragonfly. Anthony installed the artwork in time for their School Summer Fair.
Instagram - @antsgreentree
Website - antsgreentree.com



DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS?

BDS Member Patricia Clissold managed to capture this Damselfly directly from behind, creating a comedic outline that requires a double take. Taken at Oxon Borrow Pit in June this year.



GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES

Jed Corbett sent in his dragonfly encounter at Stodmarsh, Kent, this June. "Seeing the dragonfly land, I looked at it through the viewfinder of my camera and noticed two pairs of wings, slightly offset which I thought was rather odd. After rubbing my eyes and checking my camera I took another look before realising I was in fact seeing two dragonflies. One was resting immediately on the opposite side of the bramble stem which gave an illusion of the one having four wings. Then I noticed the abdomen of a third dragonfly dropping into the frame so quickly took a photograph of all three. I believe the range of the Norfolk Hawker is expanding and their numbers increasing. It was a great moment, seeing the three of them chilling out together!"

MEETING A STICKY END

Back in May this year, Andy McGeeney spotted this Four-spotted Chaser impaled on a rush stem. How did it manage to get in this pickle?



A VERY ODD COUPLE

David Turrell spotted this very unusual pairing, a Large Red Damselfly and a Beautiful Demoiselle, along the Ruddycleave Water on Dartmoor in June.



If you would like your special sighting to feature in the next issue of Dragonfly News then **tag us on social media** or send your submissions to **lauren.kennedy@british-dragonflies.org.uk**

DRAGONFLY HQ

Read the latest news and project updates from Team Dragonfly.

MEMBERSHIP



Panshanger Park - Tarmac

KEEPING YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP-TO-DATE

We'd like to thank all our members for their ongoing support. Your membership helps us protect dragonflies and their habitats, fund vital conservation projects, and share knowledge through our events and publications.

As a friendly reminder, our membership subscription rates changed in April 2024. The new rates are listed clearly on our website and we ask all members to ensure their payments are updated to match these new amounts ahead of renewal.

Please take a moment to review your standing order or other payment method to ensure it reflects the new rates. Updating now will help us avoid interruptions to your membership and ensure you remain part of our community working to protect dragonflies and their wetland habitats.

Our preferred method of payment is Direct Debit, as it significantly reduces staff administration time. This means we can spend more of our resources on conservation work rather than processing payments, helping us do more for dragonflies and their habitats.

Thank you for acting promptly and for being part of the dragonfly conservation movement.

For more information on membership please use the following QR code:



Leslie Carter

EVENTS

EVENTS OF 2025

We've had a fantastic year getting out and about across the country, meeting dragonfly enthusiasts, families, members, and recorders.

We started the season at Somerset CDR John van Gowler's fantastic Dragonfly Day, a fab opportunity to celebrate dragonflies in the stunning Somerset Levels.

Another highlight was attending the Festival of Nature's Wild Weekend in Bristol, meeting over 600 people a day! This was a wonderful occasion to introduce kids to the dragonfly life cycle and the wonder of these insects. This year's Global BirdFair was a whirlwind of meeting familiar faces, introducing people to the Society's conservation work, and attending talks by CDRs, ambassadors, and members of our Youth Panel.

More events took place in Hampshire, Derbyshire, Cambridgeshire, and at our Dragonfly Hotspots. As a result, we've spread the magic of dragonflies to over 5000 people this summer. Many thanks to our members for supporting our engagement work and to the volunteers who helped us run these events.

Meanwhile, our County Dragonfly Recorders and other volunteers have run a fantastic programme of local guided walks and field meetings, helping to improve dragonfly identification skills and monitoring efforts across the country. Thank you to all those involved!



Global BirdFair



Festival of Nature Wild Weekend

HOTSPOTS

RSPB CAMPFIELD MARSH LAUNCH



To kick off Dragonfly Week, we launched our latest Hotspot, RSPB Campfield Marsh, with a celebration day featuring dragonfly cupcakes, craft activities, and a wonderful guided walk led by Mike and Anne Abbs.

We are delighted to have RSPB Campfield Marsh as a Hotspot following on from their fantastic work reintroducing the White-faced Darter. This spring, hundreds of larvae have been carefully selected from a nearby population and moved to the site, with the first adult emerging this summer.

At the launch, the weather was against us in a blustery, drizzly day, yet Mike and Anne managed to find 4 species of dragonfly on our walk, an impressive feat in the conditions! We unveiled our new Hotspot information board by the pond and dipping area. The site's facilities should provide an excellent opportunity for people to learn and engage with dragonflies, and we're looking forward to seeing what happens on site over the next few years.

Many thanks to Mhairi and Dan, RSPB staff at Campfield Marsh, and their fab team of volunteers for their support.

If you're local or visiting Cumbria, do check out the site's amazing mix of habitats and keep an eye out for the newly emerging White-faced Darter population!

AN UPDATE FROM TIM COLESHAW, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



What a mixed year 2025 has turned out to be! The long, hot summer has facilitated yet more range extensions for many of our southern species, with my home county of Shropshire seeing its first records of Willow Emerald Damselfly following the appearance of Norfolk Hawker in 2024. On the downside, we have had very little rain here for over four months and many pools and upland streams are now completely dry, with obvious negative impacts on breeding Odonata, at least in the short to medium term.

For me, this has really hammered home the importance of some of the work that BDS is currently undertaking to combat the impacts of climate change on our wetland habitats. As previously reported in DN, the pond creation work that we have undertaken in Scotland for Northern Damselfly has already borne fruit with rapid colonisation of several of the restored ponds by this species. Likewise our Dragonflies on the Bog project, where, as described in this issue, we have been massively encouraged to find that restored areas have already been utilised by all three target species. Together with the wider peatland restoration programme taking place across Scotland, this project should hugely increase and improve habitat for some of our rarest species and help mitigate the effects of our warming planet.

I hope that you have been able to get out and enjoy what has been a great flight season this summer, and please remember to submit your records through the usual channels to help us monitor the rapid changes that are taking place in the dragonfly world.

There are changes here at BDS that will be coming into effect in the coming months. Sadly, we have recently said goodbye to two of our members of staff, Jess Slight, our Membership Officer, and Sarah Miller, our Development & Operations Manager. We thank them for everything that they have done for BDS and wish them well for the future. The current economic climate, which is proving very difficult for small charities with increased operational costs and reducing income streams, has also forced us to consider other cost-saving measures that we can make to keep the Society on a financially sustainable footing. The cost of printing and mailing out our two publications, Dragonfly News and the Journal of the British Dragonfly Society now consumes a significant proportion of our membership subscriptions so we have made the decision, like several similar charities, to make our publications digital only, freeing up £20k per annum to spend on dragonfly conservation.

The Journal will now be made available on our website as soon as it is published, rather than after two years, which is our current practice. This will hopefully increase the accessibility and readership of our Journal and allow researchers to consult papers as soon as they are published.

Starting in Spring 2026, Dragonfly News will also go digital, available on a password-protected online reader for members on our website – you can see a sample here:

Please use the password **Calopteryx24** to access.

We know that this decision will not be universally popular but we are sure that you would wish that as much of your membership subscription as possible is spent on dragonfly conservation work. Going down this route will also significantly reduce our use of paper in the organisation. Both publications can be downloaded to your own devices for storage or printing at home.
As notifications of these will be electronic, please make sure that you provide us with your preferred email address, if you have not done so already.

Finally, we are encouraging everyone who pays their subscriptions monthly to make this via direct debit rather than standing order to help keep our administration costs to a minimum - we are no longer accepting new memberships by standing order.

We hope that by introducing these changes, BDS will continue to prosper and champion the cause for Britain's dragons and damsels. Thank you for your continuing support!



Scarlet Darter - Steve Covey

COLONIST AND MIGRANT NEWS

Written by Adrian Parr

With long periods of warm sunny weather, spring and early summer 2025 were certainly good for dragonflies and dragonfly watching, at least before droughts set in. In particular, it was an excellent time for migrants and some of our recent colonists. The highlight must be the reappearance of **Scarlet Darter** near Crossways in Dorset, especially with tenerals having been spotted, it is clear that the species is now breeding there. Given trends on the near Continent, this is likely to be the start of a much broader colonisation process.

As for immigrant species, following a poor year in 2024, **Red-veined Darter** returned with a vengeance. Sightings, all of mature adults, commenced on 3 May and by the end of July there had been records from almost 100 sites in Britain; this represents one of the biggest arrivals we have ever seen. Of particular note were the 60+ individuals seen at Flamborough Head, East Yorkshire, on 16 June and the 10–30 seen at Yeolands Quarry on the Isle of Portland, Dorset, during late May and June. Few dragonflies seemed to make it further north than the Scottish Borders, though red darters seen at two sites in the Orkney Islands on 12 July likely refer to this species. Back in England and Wales, mating and/or oviposition were widely reported, and emergences of second-generation individuals this autumn are keenly anticipated.

Accompanying the Red-veined Darter influx, **Vagrant Emperor** were also widely reported, usually just as singletons but occasionally with groups of up to ten or more being seen. So far there have been sightings from over 20 localities as far apart as Cornwall and the Hebrides, with a few records also coming from Ireland. Oviposition was noted at Carlton Marshes in Suffolk and Newmains in the Scottish Borders, but whether these breeding attempts will be successful remains to be seen.

Of our other migrants, **Lesser Emperor** continues to go from strength to strength. Many of those seen will now be locally-bred individuals, but it was clear that significant migration also took place during 2025. Males were photographed as far north as Embleton, Northumberland, and Barrow Lodge, Lancashire. There was also a report from Sumburgh Head in the Shetland Isles on 16 July, and if confirmed, this would be a first for the Islands, and one of the most northerly ever records for the species.

Norfolk Hawker continued its recent range expansion and turned up in many totally new areas, again some well to the north. Particularly important finds included several individuals discovered in Yorkshire, notably at both Rodley NR (a Dragonfly Hotspot) and Staveley NR in W. Yorkshire and at Nosterfield in N. Yorkshire; oviposition was indeed observed at Rodley. More remarkably still, an individual was even seen at a private site in Northumberland, not far short of the Scottish border. Elsewhere, individuals were reported from Fenns, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR, with records from both the English and Welsh sections of the complex, and one was seen at Kenfig in Glamorganshire.

With all this excitement going on, it was easy to overlook the fact that some migrants and new colonists seemed to fare less well than expected. **Southern Emerald Damselfly**, in particular, has so far only been reported in very low numbers, perhaps a consequence of many of its breeding sites drying out during this year's droughts, before all individuals had successfully emerged. On the positive side, the colony discovered in Cornwall last year has fared well, and indeed another colony has now been discovered in a different part of the county. Clearly, the slightly wetter nature of Britain's west coast does have advantages!

For a summary of the first dates of the 2025 flight season visit our website:

SCOTLAND PROJECTS



Summer has flown by in Scotland, with most of the weather being very favourable for dragonflies on the wing, for a change! There have been three main projects on the go, keeping us very busy.

Buchaille Etive Mor

Written by
Jen Davidson (Scotland Conservation Officer)

DRAGONFLIES ON THE BOG

Funded by Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, administered by NatureScot.

This project is focused on the restoration of bog pools, known to be drying, in areas where the three target species (Azure Hawker, White-faced Darter, and Northern Emerald) are present and require breeding habitat.
Emma Stevens-Veitch, our new Dragonflies on the Bog Project Officer and I have been spending a lot of time out on the seven remaining project sites across the north-west Highlands in order to assess them and create a plan ready for autumn/winter when we can get low-pressure excavators on the bog to carry out the necessary work of installing small peat dams to deepen and widen existing pools.
This builds upon the work carried out last winter at Corrour Estate, where the trial pools started by Pat Batty (BDS Scotland Recorder) and Daniele Muir (BDS Scotland Engagement Officer) in 2023 were expanded. Surveys carried out during 2024 and 2025 flight seasons have proven that these pools have been a success for the three rare target species, as well as for other species such as Common Hawker and Black Darter of which Scotland is now a stronghold given their rapidly dwindling numbers across Europe.



Graham Rennie sharing his dragonfly knowledge at Corrour

Four training events were held to get volunteers familiar with the identification of the rare target species and survey methods. The first three events were delivered over May and July, at our showcase site, Corrour Estate, with the permission of Sarah Watts (Conservation Manager) and we were provided with a wonderful lunch at Corrour Station restaurant. One of the training events also included a photography workshop, provided by James Aikman and Paul Fraser, who shared their skills with the volunteers in the finer points of photographing larvae and dragonflies on the wing. We finished up the photography with an early morning session at Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve where we photographed Golden-Ringed larvae, sleepy Large Red Damselflies and Common Darters. Naturescot staff provided us with a fine breakfast of fresh tea and toast! The final event was held in the stunning location of Glen Coe supported by National Trust for Scotland Ranger, Lindsay Warner, and the addition of a wonderful

packed lunch from their visitor centre café. We now have a skilled and eager team of over thirty wonderful volunteers ready to get out on our restoration sites and monitor the pools over the coming years. This will allow us to measure the success of the project in preserving and enhancing breeding habitat for these species now under threat from the effects of climate change.

We are also working on sites that are undergoing peatland restoration programmes. This means that the erosion and drainage of the peat bogs supporting our rare species will be addressed which will sustain our restored habitat and breeding populations for even longer.

NORTHERN DAMSELFLY PROJECT

Funded by Cairngorms National Park Authority and BMW Recharge in Nature: This project concentrates efforts on habitat connectivity between known Northern Damselfly breeding sites, particularly on a stretch of both the River Dee and River Spey catchments, with some other sites in Perthshire. This is a priority species for the National Park, and the British Dragonfly Society, given that it is listed as endangered and in the UK is only present in Scotland. Glyn Jones MVO, Head Ranger at Balmoral, and his volunteers surveyed this season and found that the majority of ponds restored on Balmoral Estate during winter 2024 now have Northern Damselfly present, a resounding success! We aim to replicate this work over the coming autumn/winter, and are holding volunteer survey and identification training workshops during August and September.


Photography and survey training at Crag Meagaidh

"Northern Damselfly present at the majority of restored pools - a resounding success"


Emma Stevens-Veitch surveying at Hilton and Guisachan

FORESTRY AND LAND SCOTLAND

A partnership agreement to work together over the next 5 years in line with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy outcomes was signed in March. We will be working closely with Forestry Environmental Area Managers to restore and improve habitat for dragonflies in and around woodlands on the Forestry and Land Scotland estates right across Scotland. Talks are currently underway to look at restoration of ponds, pools and runnels within Glen Affric, which will complement the scheduled Dragonflies on the Bog works this autumn/winter with their adjoining land owner neighbours and contribute to the landscape-scale dragonfly conservation efforts. Watch this space for more news!

BUCKLER'S FOREST



The site is home to a diverse mix of wildlife, including Clouded Yellow Butterflies

This summer Buckler's Forest hits the milestone of 30 dragonfly species.
By Des Sussex (Berkshire CDR), Steve Harley & Nick Percival

In late July 2025 a Southern Migrant Hawker was photographed at Buckler's Forest in Crowthorne, Berkshire. This was a very exciting moment for the photographer, Steve Harley, as it was the first confirmed sighting for the modern county of Berkshire. Equally exciting was the fact that this is the 30th species to be recorded at the site since it was created about 10 years ago. Buckler's Forest was opened to public access in 2018, and additional areas have been created and opened more recently.

Buckler's Forest open space has been created from what used to be the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), a mostly coniferous forest with a network of roads and tracks for vehicle testing and road safety research. It had occasional other uses – such as hosting Sting for scenes in the Quadrophenia film. The TRL site was allocated for a major housing development, but through the local planning policy (to avoid increased recreational pressure on the adjacent parts of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) this development also needed to include a large public open space providing 'semi-natural habitats' and accessible walks for local people. Working with Bracknell Forest Council, the developers created a mosaic of woodland, flower-rich grassland, and wetlands. There are no less than 7 permanent ponds (in most years) of various shapes, depths, and sizes, most with a good diversity of marginal and emergent vegetation. In addition, there are another 5 or so ponds and wetlands which are prone to drying during drought years. These still form valuable seasonal wetland habitat and, vitally they contribute to managing the significant surface water run-off in wet periods and preventing any flood risk to the new housing – a multi-functional sustainable urban drainage system.

Up to 2018 there do not appear to have been any dragonflies recorded at this site. In 2019 the first records of 5 common species revealed a bit of potential, but whilst the pond habitats were establishing quickly, the site was still unknown to most local naturalists. As we 'put the word around' there were more visits and in 2020 Nick Percival's find of some Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies sparked a lot of interest. Between 2020 and 2022 there were over 200 records in each year of many species and by many observers. There are still many recorders who have this site

as a favourite on their list to visit each year.
As the site is adjacent to Crowthorne Woods and Swinley Forest, which support a good assemblage of heathland species, there was clearly a local source of colonisation, and indeed it was not long before Small Red Damselfly, Keeled Skimmer and Golden-ringed Dragonfly were seen. The Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly is perhaps still the 'star species', with a small colony seen every year since 2020. Downy and Brilliant Emerald are both regularly recorded and it would be good to confirm breeding. There have been just 2 records of Black Darter, a species with small local populations, and perhaps the most 'at risk' species in the wider area.
Of the 30 species seen so far, at least 21 have breeding populations, and some occur in good numbers. Additionally, it is likely that both emerald dragonflies and possibly Golden-ringed are breeding within the site, but there does not appear to be suitable flowing water to support the demoiselles, which have both been recorded as wandering visitors. The Lesser Emperor and Southern Migrant Hawker both made for memorable visits for some regular recorders.

Buckler's Forest is over 40 hectares with a car park and over 4 km of well-surfaced paths. Many of the ponds have easy access for watching dragonflies. The site shows what can be achieved for nature with the right planning for habitat creation, and we wondered how many other single sites in the UK are fortunate to boast such a high species richness of dragonflies. Other wildlife species recorded include Woodlark, Crossbill, Woodcock, Little Ringed Plover, Purple Emperor, Clouded Yellow, and the Grayling butterfly which is often seen in very good numbers.
The site is very popular with dog walkers - many of which do swim in some ponds – and as we know this is not ideal for wildlife. However the site was created as a 'SANG' (suitable alternative natural greenspace) to be attractive for informal recreation including dog walking, so some recreational impacts are to be expected. Fortunately there is plenty of great pond habitat that remains undisturbed. Some of the ponds have viewing platforms – which double up as great places for pond dipping.

For more information about the site and for the full species list:



Southern Migrant Hawker - the 30th species photographed 25/07/25 by Steve Harley

All images taken by Steve Harley

ODONATA TO OBSERVE



SCARCE BLUE-TAILED DAMSELFLY



SMALL RED DAMSELFLY



LESSER EMPEROR



BRILLIANT EMERALD



EXPANSION OF "SOUTHERN" DRAGONFLIES INTO SCOTLAND

Many 'southern' dragonflies have been moving northwards during the last few decades, and some have recently begun to breed in Scotland. In the last edition of the magazine, we looked at the northward expansion of Emperor Dragonfly and Migrant Hawker for which breeding in southern Scotland is now well established.
This article will describe the spread of Banded Demoiselle, Broad-bodied Chaser, Red-veined Darter and Black-tailed Skimmer.
Written by Pat Batty and Barbara Mearns

Broad-bodied Chaser site - Alan Brown

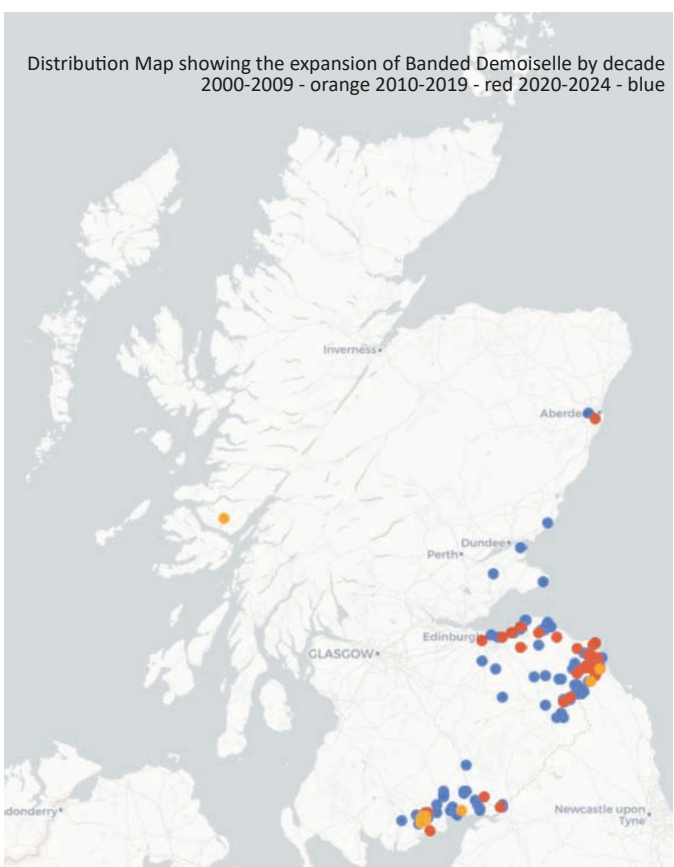
BANDED DEMOISELLE

The first Scottish Banded Demoiselle appeared near the Solway coast, Dumfriesshire, in 2002. The first breeding colony was found on the Kirkgunzeon Lane, near Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire, in 2004 and soon other colonies were found on the Black Sark and other Dumfriesshire rivers. It has been slow to spread westwards, but in 2024 it reached the Bridge of Dee near Castle Douglas. In SE Scotland it first turned up on the Whiteadder Water, near the English border, in 2010, and this population has since expanded with 230 adults observed on a 500m stretch in 2024. It is now also on the Rivers Tweed and Teviot and since 2014 has been spreading rapidly in the SE and the Lothians. It is now a well-established breeder in southern Scotland and making forays further north: prospecting males have been recorded from Fife and as far north as Aberdeen.



Banded Demoiselle larva - Barbara Mearns

Banded Demoiselles mostly breed on slow-moving streams, but during the summers of 2023 and 2024, one of us (BM) was surprised to see displaying males on the broad, fast-flowing River Annan, when water levels were fairly low. At Caerlaverock WWT Reserve, larvae have been found in the Lochar Water where it is tidal. In the SE, adults have been seen feeding at ponds close to breeding streams.



Distribution Map showing the expansion of Banded Demoiselle by decade 2000-2009 - orange 2010-2019 - red 2020-2024 - blue

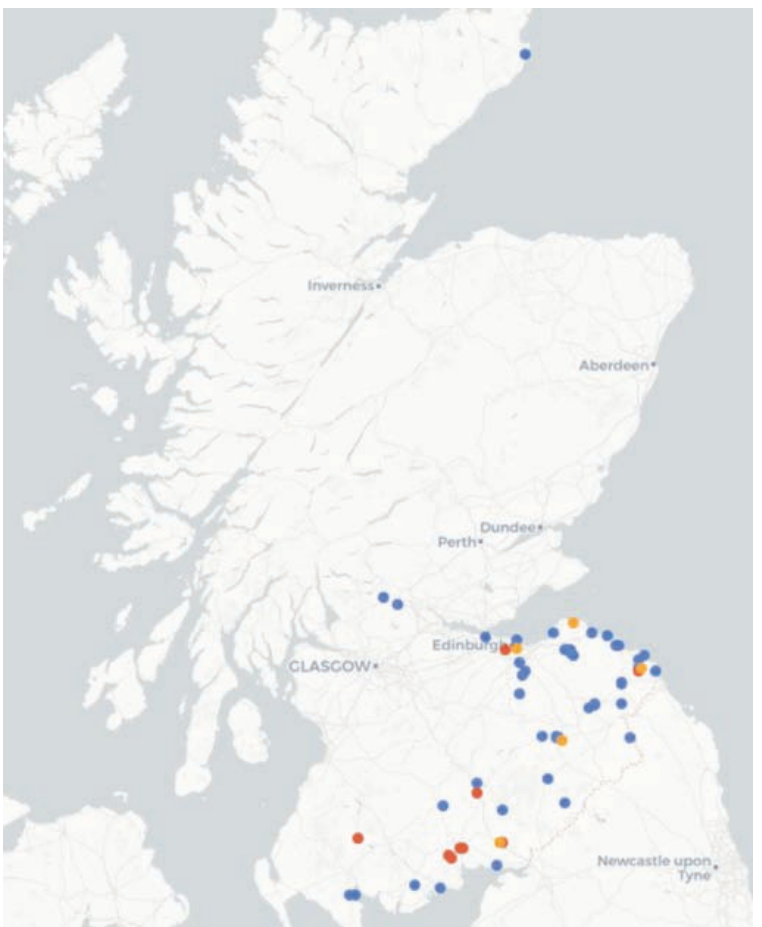
Beautiful Demoiselle has not bred in southern Scotland although it has long bred in Cumbria and in the mild mid-west of Scotland.

BROAD-BODIED CHASER

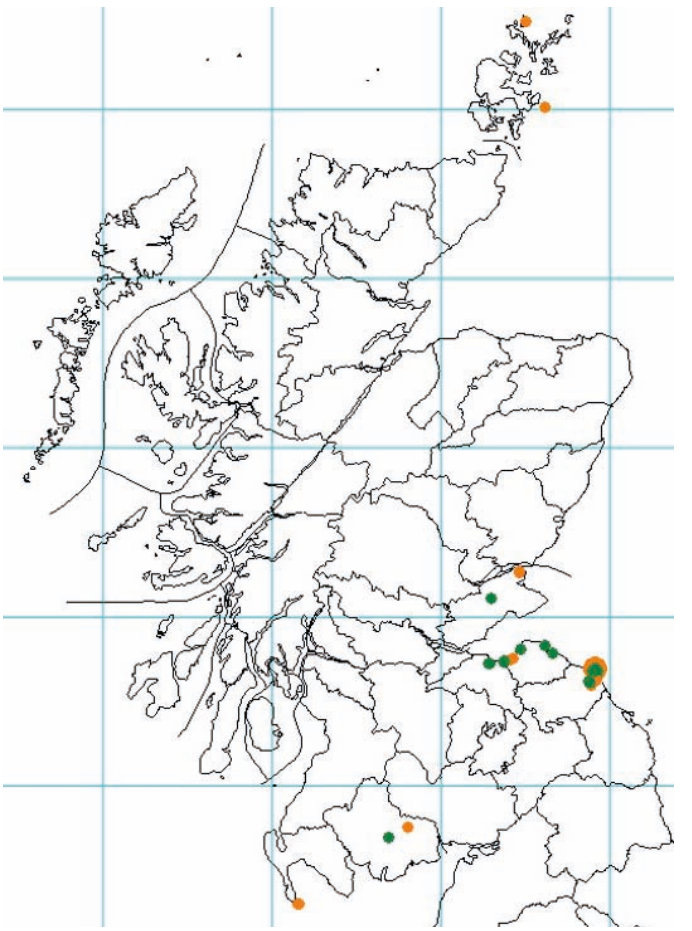
A pioneer species which disperses widely, in search of new, clear ponds with little vegetation, when its established sites become too mature. It was first recorded in 2003 at an Edinburgh pond, possibly brought in with plants. In the warm summers of 2006 and 2009 it was seen at three sites in the SW and one in the SE, with egg laying noted. Since then, it has been recorded intermittently in very small numbers until 2022 and 2023 when there was a large increase. It is now well-established in East Lothian, where breeding was confirmed at ponds near Gifford in 2022. Most sites are scattered throughout the SE with only a few in the SW. In 2023 there were casual records from Stirlingshire and Moray, but the latter could have been from larvae introduced with plants to a garden pond: a 2022 Caithness record was from a garden centre. Ovipositing was recorded from 2020-2024 and emergence was noted in 2021 and 2023. It continues to expand its range, particularly occurring at new ponds with bare edges.

RED-VEINED DARTER

An erratic migrant, only seen in warm summers and then mainly along the east coast. In 2006 there was a massive immigration, with nearly a thousand individuals counted across Britain and Ireland: 27 records came from Berwickshire. One of these migrants was seen by David Graham at his ponds on Newmains Farm, near Eyemouth, and he also found single males there in 2021 and 2022. In the meantime, there have been other occasional records in southern Scotland, mostly on the Berwickshire coast and around Edinburgh, especially in 2023. During the cooler wetter season in 2024 however there was only one confirmed sighting. Egg-laying was seen on several occasions in 2006 and in 2017, 2019 and 2022, but it is not known if any larvae developed and reached maturity. This darter likes sunny, shallow pools with sparse vegetation, where larvae can develop rapidly and emerge the same year or the next, but though it has sporadically bred in England, cold winters cause high mortality. Migrants reached Orkney in 2017, 2020 and 2023.

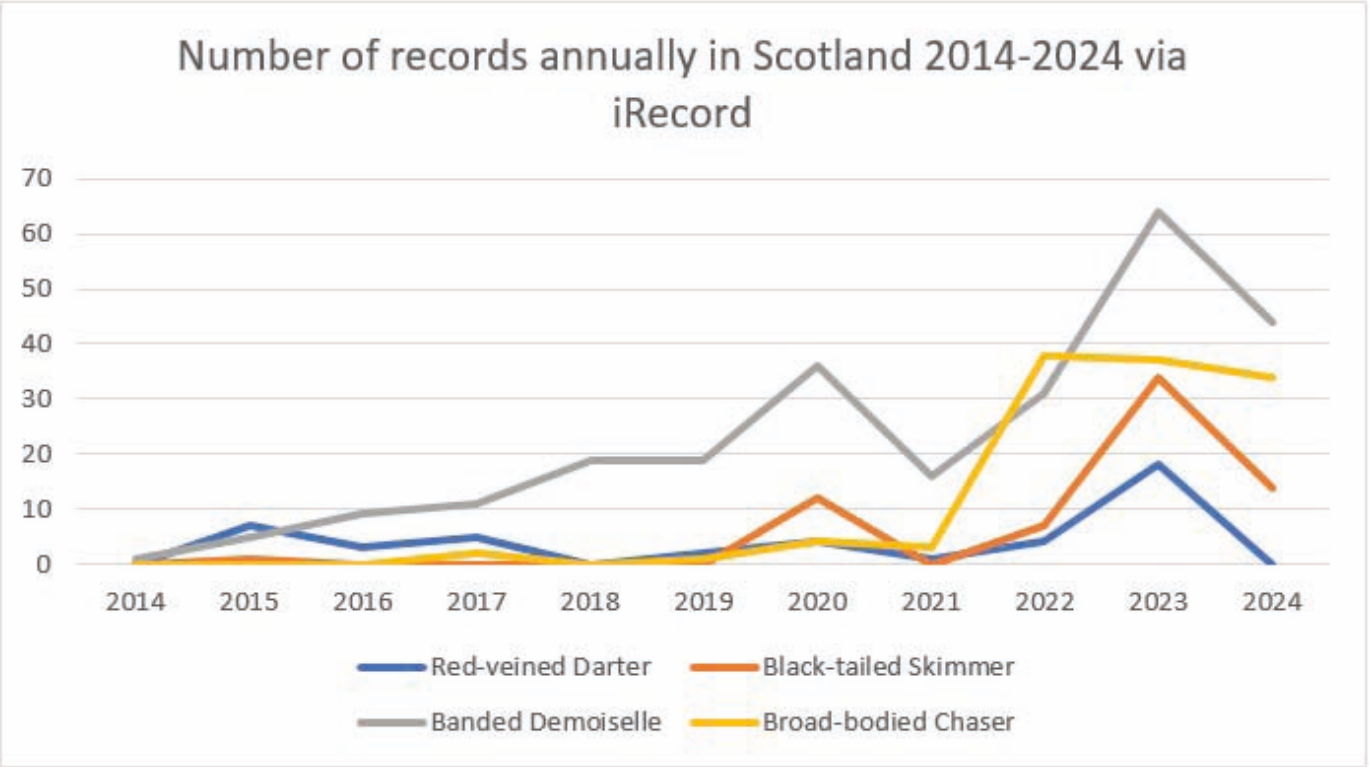


Distribution map showing the expansion of Broad-bodied Chaser by decade
Red -2000-2009. Orange 2010-2019. Blue 2020- 2024



The Distribution Map in Scotland 2000-2023 of Red-veined Darter (orange) and Black-tailed Skimmer (green)

Data provided by NBN Trust (2025). The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. https://nbnatlas.org/



BLACK-TAILED SKIMMER

This species breeds at a wide range of ponds, lakes, drains, heathland pools and slow-flowing rivers, often with bare margins. It was first recorded, in both Berwickshire and Fife, in 2006. The skimmer was then only occasionally recorded, mainly in Berwickshire, in good summers: in 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022 and 2023. From 2022 it was also seen at Seton near Edinburgh, and in 2023 at the Ken-Dee marshes in Kirkcudbrightshire. (David Clarke reports that 2023 was a particularly good year for them in Cumbria). Ovipositing was recorded in 2006 and 2022, and at four sites in 2023. In 2024, after a wet spring and summer, there were fewer records.

OTHER RECENT ARRIVALS

Brown Hawker has bred at a single Scottish site at South Haugh, Hamilton, Lanarkshire, since 2020, but in 2024 was found to be established at the nearby RSPB Barons Haugh Reserve. Its origins are a mystery. Larvae could have been accidentally introduced, but being a strong flier, it may have come naturally. The nearest breeders are in Northumberland, Cumbria and the Isle of Man, but it possibly arrived from Northern Ireland on the dominant westerly winds.


Black-tailed Skimmer - David Graham

Lesser Emperor is a migrant, with a breeding population recently established in SE England. In Scotland, it was first recorded on Orkney, in 2017, and has since occurred at a few widely scattered locations. In 2019 it turned up at Mire Loch, St Abbs, in Berwickshire and three were seen, one egg-laying, at the same site in 2022. It was recorded there again in 2024. In 2020, a pair was watched, ovipositing in tandem, at a shallow pool on lowland raised bog in Kirkcudbrightshire.

REASONS AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

The spread of all these species can be attributed to increased temperatures due to climate change and is part of the general northward movement of many insects, including butterflies and moths. It is not known what the effects of increased competition will have on the resident species. The Banded Demoiselle usually prefers slower flowing waters than the Beautiful Demoiselle which has more of a western distribution. However, in Cumbria, there are several rivers where Banded Demoiselles share territory with long-established Beautiful Demoiselle.

Broad-bodied Chaser, on the other hand, is a generalist and if the rate of expansion continues, could provide increased competition to a number of species.

The situation is dynamic, so we are grateful to all those who contribute records, and want to encourage everyone who identifies dragonflies and damselflies in Scotland to send in their records. These records are vital!

CONTINUED SUCCESS FOR WHITE-FACED DARTER IN CUMBRIA

This Red List species has been discovered breeding in new areas of Cumbria.
Written by David Clarke

In DN86 (p.28), I recounted a puzzling situation regarding records of White-faced Darters at a 'new' site in Cumbria, at Duddon Mosses (SD28) in the far south-west, near Broughton-in-Furness. On 12 May this year an excited email from the 2024 recorder resolved one aspect of the puzzle. I quote: *'I'm pleased to let you know that ... is now a breeding colony for White-faced Darters - they're all over the place! There are about a dozen small ponds and a couple of large ones. There are 1 to 3 White-faced Darters per small pond and at least 6 per large pond'*. He had taken numerous pictures in support of his discovery. These included territorial males (1) and mating pairs. This was a significant advance on the two existing records of single individuals from the past two years.

The situation took on an even more unexpected turn when on 17 May, I heard from another recorder that he too had found the species but about a kilometre from the first one. He felt that most individuals were more recently emerged than those he had just seen at the Foulshaw Moss colony 24 km away. His image (2) shows an immature male. Once again, there were sufficient numbers to indicate a more than casual presence. There had been no previous records from the second location, which is also within the Duddon Mosses NNR. Further records, from 11 June, included a few exuviae (3), the ultimate confirmation of breeding.

So, it appears that we have a new breeding area in Cumbria for White-faced Darter, and one which seems to have been reached by the species unaided, probably at least two years ago given its life-cycle length. Clearly, this is not the end of the story. Other parts of this large area now need checking - a not inconsiderable task given the extent and variable accessibility of the Duddon Mosses as a whole. Natural England advises that keeping to visible tracks, paths, obvious peat bunding or the two public rights of way across the site are the best ways to keep safe and protect the fragile ecosystem and its special wildlife. I am grateful to Nathan Sowerby (1), Chris Turner (2) and Mo Richards (3) for their records and photographic evidence.







DRAGONFLIES OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Book Review by Pam Taylor (Dragonfly Conservation Group Convenor and Trustee)



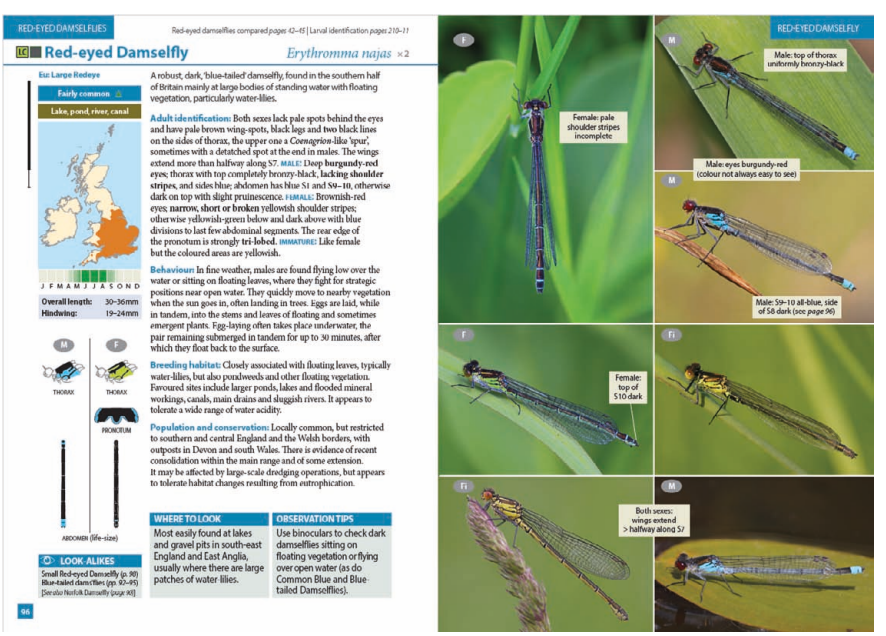
WILDGuides 'Dragonflies of Britain and Ireland' is the fifth edition of this excellent photographic field guide. You'll note its slightly shorter title this time to emphasise it covers Britain and Ireland and not just Britain. It's hard to imagine how, after four previous versions, the authors could improve on an already superb field guide, but they've certainly done it. Containing 353 new photographs and over 600 in total, it once again covers males, females, immatures and all colour forms for every species.

The opening sections of the book about biology and ecology are relatively unchanged from the fourth edition, but some photographs, the habitat chart, descriptions of the types of dragonfly, and the introduction to the species accounts have all been updated. The species accounts themselves have been improved with clearer maps than before, revised flight period charts, and extra diagrams or close-up images to show key identification features more clearly. The maps have also been amended to show recent range changes, which for some species are substantial. Additions to the double page spreads include a new indicator symbol showing the occupancy trend based on the State of Dragonflies 2021 report and new code boxes to show the revised Red List statuses in Britain and Ireland respectively.

The book is only a handful of pages longer than the fourth edition, but ten extra species now appear within the main accounts. Nine of these, including Winter Damselfly, Green Darner, and Large White-faced Darter, have been moved from the vagrants and potential vagrants section later in the book. However, Yellow-spotted Emerald is completely new, having been seen and recorded for the first and only time in Britain (so far) in 2018. This means that all species currently on the British and Irish lists are now in the main accounts, including two species considered regionally extinct in the UK. It was a wise decision to move them forward, since Dainty Damselfly was also missing, presumed extinct in Britain, between 1953 and 2010. It has since recolonised. This rearrangement of species leaves just seven dragonflies in the potential vagrants section including another new dragonfly for the guide, Violet Dropwing, which is currently advancing north through Europe. Although the page rearrangements make sense, the order of blue damselfly species and that of darters have both been changed, which might initially confuse regular users of previous editions.

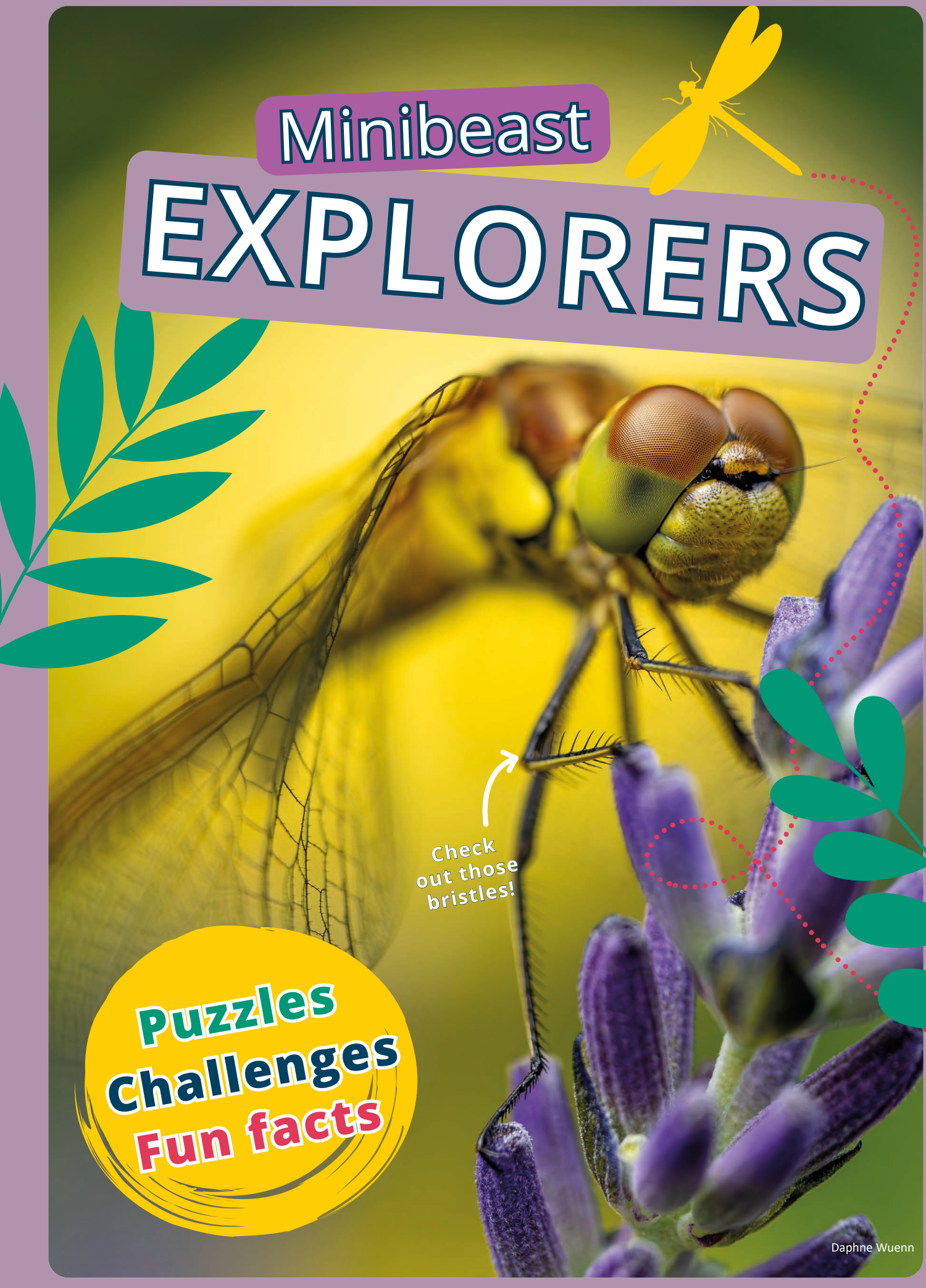
Like the introductory sections, the final pages of the guide dealing with eggs, larvae, photography and where to find rarer species, are little changed with just a few updates where further knowledge has been gained. However, the section dealing with conservation status and legislation has been rewritten in line with revised listings and a completely new checklist of species has been added.

Overall I highly recommend this fifth edition. The extra photographs all have a clear purpose and many more from the fourth edition have been replaced by new versions with less fussy backgrounds, making identification even easier than before. Recent climate and habitat changes, together with increased recording, have greatly changed the known distributions of many species making this updated guide a must have for all dragonfly enthusiasts.

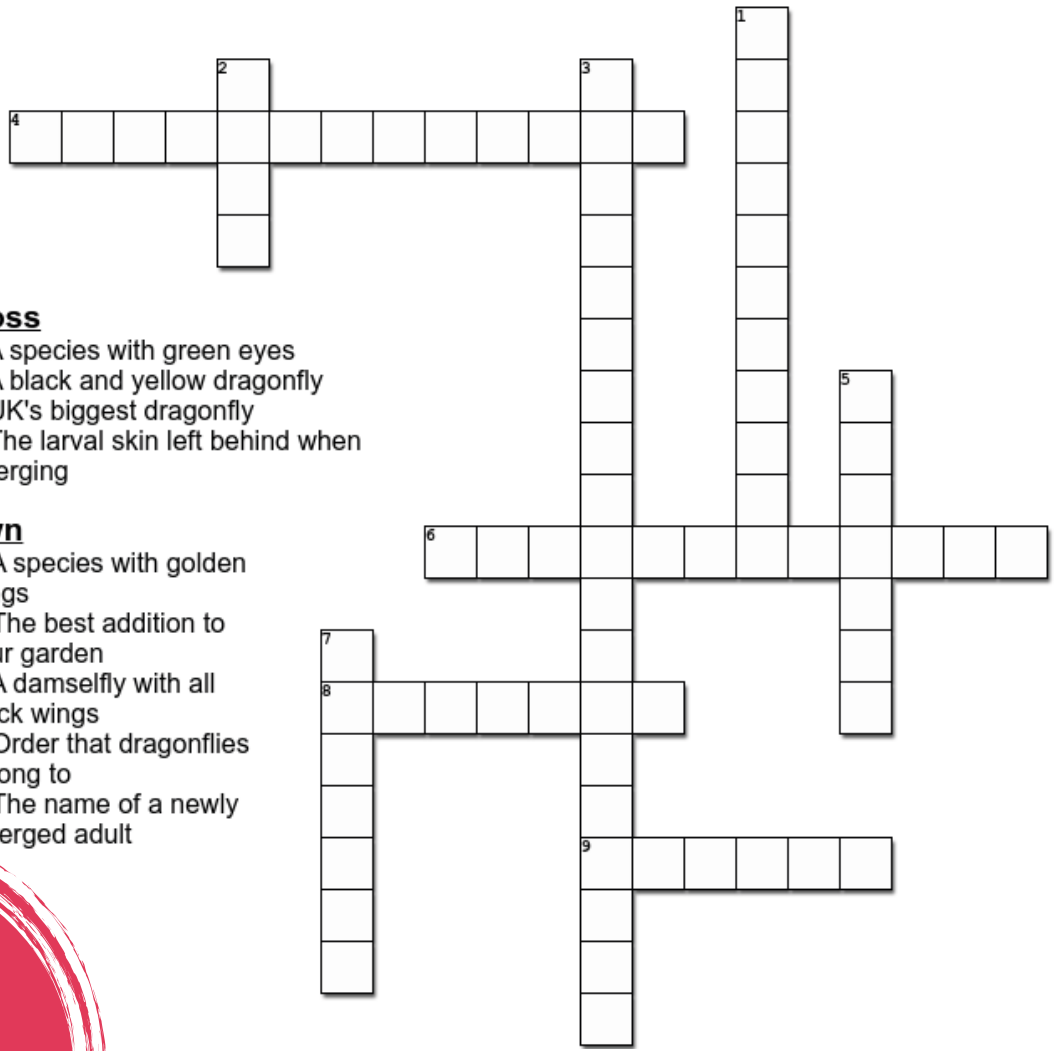


Dragonflies of Britain and Ireland. Fifth Edition, 2025 By Dave Smallshire and Andy Swash
Publisher: Princeton University Press
ISBN-13: 978-0-691-27659-5

Minibeast EXPLORERS



Four Wings Across



Across

4. A species with green eyes
6. A black and yellow dragonfly
8. UK's biggest dragonfly
9. The larval skin left behind when emerging

Down

1. A species with golden wings
2. The best addition to your garden
3. A damselfly with all black wings
5. Order that dragonflies belong to
7. The name of a newly emerged adult

FUN FACT

Dragonfly legs have bristles which act as a basket to catch and hold prey.



Dragon Art

We would love to see your dragonfly art. Get creative this autumn and winter creating dragonfly art, whether that's a dragonfly portrait or a pond-scape scene. Take a look at the images on our website for inspiration! Send images of your art work to our editor - lauren.kennedy@british-dragonflies.org.uk to be featured in the next issue of the magazine.

A splash of colour



FUN FACT

Dragonfly wings can destroy bacteria on contact due to their surface structure, which features a pattern of microscopic, sharp spikes called nanopillars



Scan the QR for the solutions

Youth Membership

Do you know a young person who is interested in dragonflies? Or are you looking for a meaningful gift for a young nature enthusiast?

A British Dragonflies Youth Membership is the perfect way to spark curiosity and connect with the world of dragonflies and damselflies. Every new member receives a welcome pack with our most recent magazine and journal, and a pocket ID guide. Youth members will then receive our twice yearly magazine as well opportunities to get involved in events, field meetings and local groups. Our membership encourages a love for dragonflies while helping to protect these incredible insects.



© Louise Moon

Youth Membership just £1.50 per month

VOLUNTEERING AND PROJECTS SPOTLIGHT

MONMOUTHSHIRE DRAGONFLY ATLAS ASSISTANT

The Monmouthshire 2030 dragonfly atlas project was set up in 2020 by Monmouthshire County Dragonfly Recorder Steve Preddy. The aim is to produce Monmouthshire's first dragonfly atlas. To complete the atlas volunteers are needed to visit under-recorded areas: get in touch to find out more.

Contact: Steve Preddy - steve.preddy@me.com


Gareth William Tonks

HERTFORDSHIRE'S DRAGONFLY ATLAS SURVEY

Get involved and help to collect records of dragonflies in Hertfordshire for 2022-2027, with two or three visits made to each tetrad of the county. You could be adding valuable data to allow a new and updated atlas. New species have been added to the county since the last atlas, including the Southern Emerald Damselfly.

For more information visit our website


Simon Mackie

RSPB CONWY DRAGONFLY HOTSPOT

Designated a Hotspot in 2024, the site in North Wales is working to manage areas for dragonflies. This includes creating new pools and managing existing pools with dragonflies in mind. They are looking for volunteers who could assist in dragonfly recording, habitat management and outreach.

Contact: conwy@rspb.org.uk


Nathan Lowe

DRAGONFLIES OF ATTINGHAM PARK

The team at National Trust Attingham Park are keen to learn more about the dragonflies living within the estate, and breeding in its numerous ponds and rivers within its boundary. As the nature recovery project gets underway, they also want to assess the impact of management activities. We would love to hear from you if you would like to participate

Contact: Ellie Colver - ellie.colver@british-dragonflies.org.uk


National Trust

THE DRAGONFLY RECORDER QUESTIONNAIRE

A project to understand the decision-making of recorders when collecting and reporting dragonfly species' observations.
Written by Diana Bowler - UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

The UK has a long and celebrated history of volunteer recording of species. Species observations submitted to record centres and recording platforms flow into public databases such as the NBN (https://nbnatlas.org) and GBIF (https://gbif.org). With growing evidence of declines in insect numbers, it is more important than ever to maintain and develop these data flows. Dragonfly occurrence records already underpin regional and national atlases and are used in scientific studies about topics such as changes in species' distributions, responses to climate change and interactions among species.

Dragonfly recording is also diverse, which can sometimes create challenges when using the data. For some insect groups, such as butterflies, bees, and other pollinators, structured and standardized protocols are often employed – in schemes such as the UKBMS (https://ukbms.org/), BeeWalks (https://beewalk.org.uk/) and PoMS (https://ukpoms.org.uk/) respectively. For dragonflies, there is a diversity of possible approaches for monitoring them and different data platforms. While iRecord is recommended by the BDS, there are other apps (e.g., iNaturalist) that can be used for dragonfly recording that each collect slightly different information about the observation being reported.

As part of a project funded by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, we wanted to understand the decision-making of recorders when collecting and reporting dragonfly species' observations. We released a survey during September 2024 in which we directly asked recorders about how they collect data and also their opinions about how dragonfly recording might evolve in the future. We had an overwhelming response from over 700 recorders with an extraordinary level of collective experience and expertise. If you are among those, thank you so much! Here is a summary of some of the answers to our main questions.

We first asked about platform choices for recording (Fig. 1). iRecord was the most popular platform, but platform choice was determined by multiple factors. Many people mentioned preferring general apps so they can use the same app for different organisms. Others mentioned the importance of simplicity and useful tools (e.g., being able to easily see, upload or download personal observations). Verification of observations was also mentioned by many as important to motivate efforts and choice of platform.

We also asked about general experience and habits of recording (Fig. 2). Most people were confident of identifying species within their local areas, but primarily by observing adults. Most people record dragonflies at the same time as other taxa. Observations come from a balanced mix of planned surveys and opportunistic encounters. Many recorders primarily record from their home garden.

Finally, we asked for opinions about the relevance of design features of structured monitoring for dragonfly recording (Fig. 3). Most people already report complete lists of species (i.e., report all the species they see during a survey) along with the abundance of each species. Many people also already repeatedly visit the same site to record dragonflies. These practices align with the protocols of structured monitoring schemes employed for birds and butterflies and allow for robust assessments of change over time.

In terms of future practice, people were generally willing to report survey effort - reporting either how long they were looking for dragonflies or the area covered. Survey

FIGURE 1.

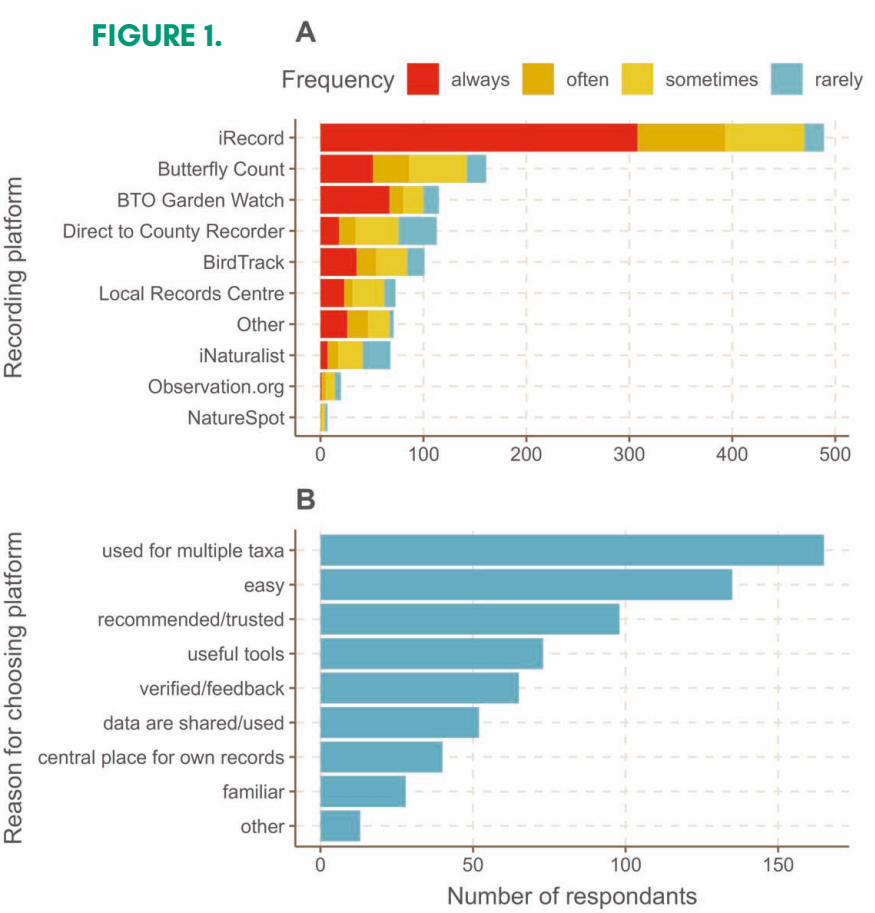
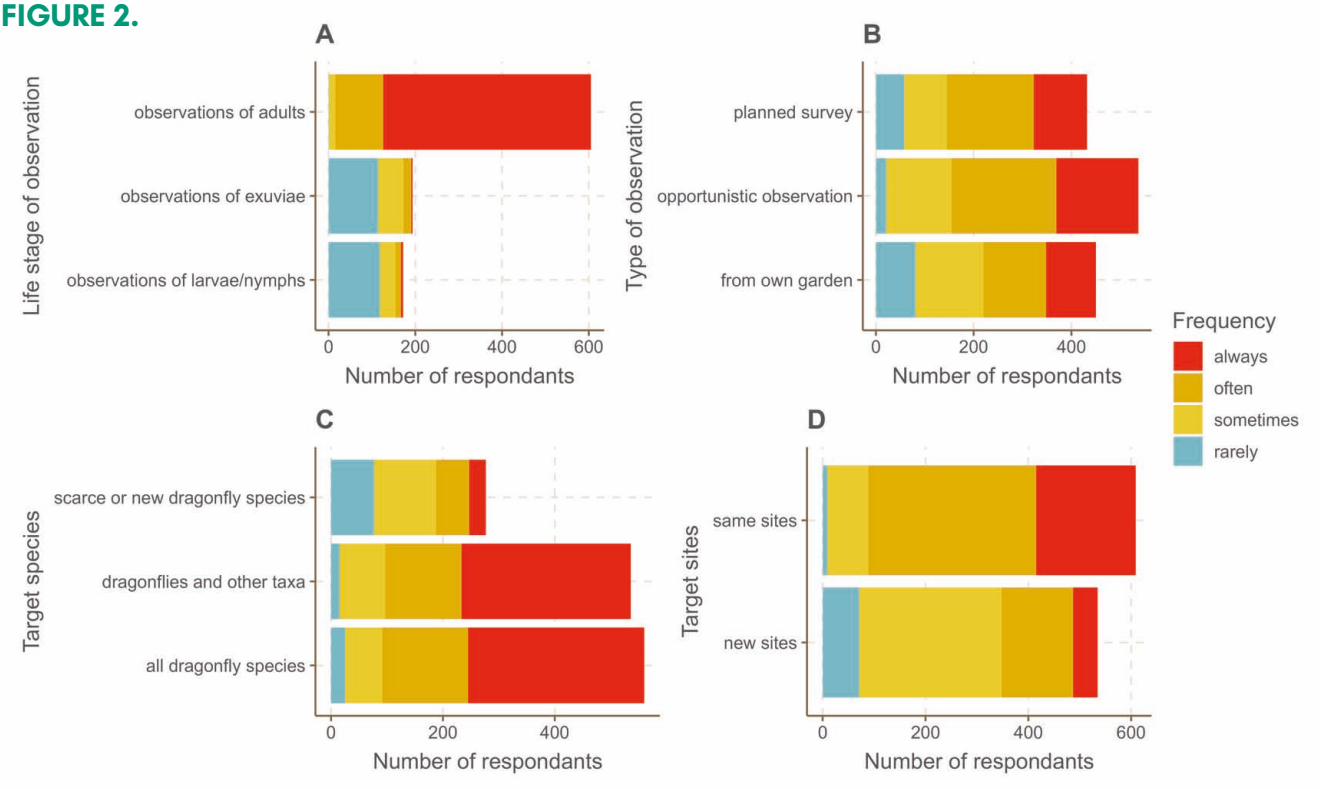


FIGURE 2.



effort isn't routinely collected by current platforms, but it could be useful in data analysis to account for variability among observations. People were also generally willing to report 'zeros' when no dragonfly species was seen. This could be useful for some types of data analysis to separate 'no species' from 'no surveys', which is not possible when only detections are reported. People were more divided on whether a single standardized protocol would work for them and their area. Indeed, attempts to establish a single structured scheme for dragonflies in other countries, including France and Japan, have not gained much momentum.

Other broad themes arising from the questionnaire were the growing amount of dragonfly data collected during bird and butterfly surveys, with dragonfly observations as 'by-catch', as well as the role of photography in species identification and verification, and the challenges that this creates for some species, such as the hawkers. See the spring edition of Dragonfly News for some tips on dragonfly photography!

These insights will be massively useful as we think about how to use these data for questions about dragonfly trends as well as monitoring threats and tracking the success of conservation action. They also highlight how recording tools could be expanded to better support dragonfly recorders and retain the full value of the data being collected. We are in the process of writing a full version of the results. If you would like to receive a copy or have any reflections on our project, please do not hesitate to email Diana Bowler (diabow@ceh.ac.uk).

This work was funded by the JNCC through the Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis project.

FIGURE 3.

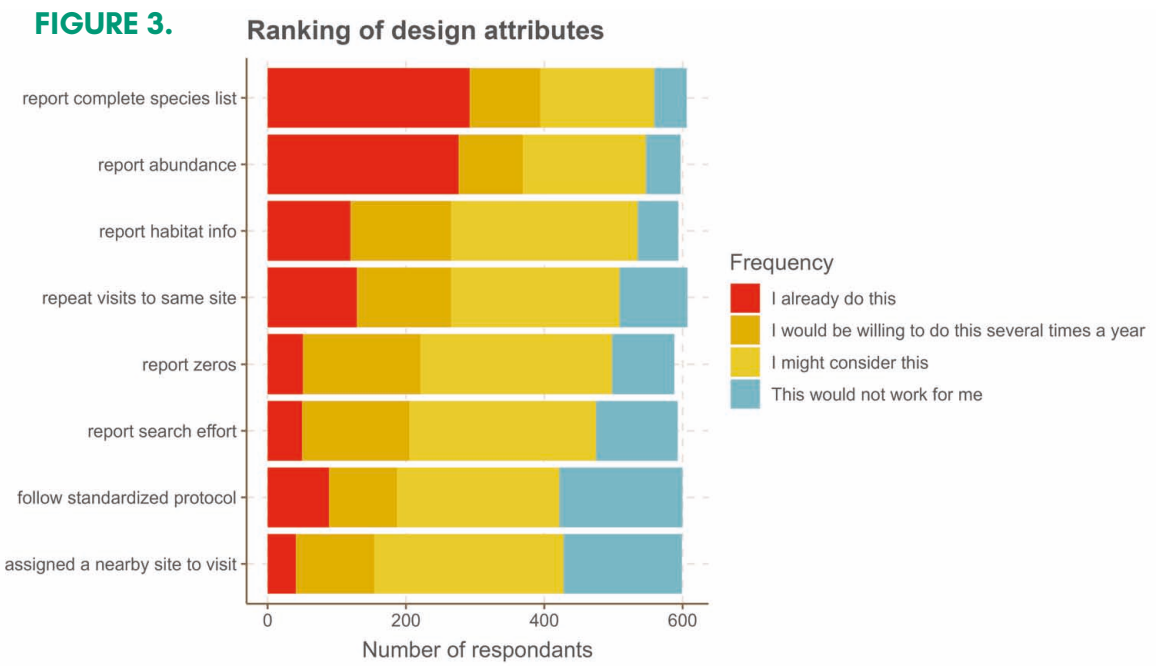


PHOTO COMPETITION 2025

Winning image: Damselfly Takeaway by Daryl Hopcroft

Flight and Focus; celebrating the beauty, precision, and movement of dragonflies and damselflies in their natural habitats.

Our top 12 images were chosen by our Youth Panel, and the winning image, by Daryl Hopcroft, was selected by our new ambassador, Paul Fraser. Paul said "The image titled Damselfly Takeaway is my favourite. I really like the scene and for me it stood out amongst the other amazing entries." Paul Fraser is a talented, award-winning macrophotographer with a deep love for ecology and the natural world. His photos don't just capture tiny details, they tell powerful stories.



Four-spotted Chaser by Peter Treen





Brilliant Emerald by Ken Elsom



Willow Emerald Damselfly by Jim Higham





Common Darters by Bruce Hyde



Southern Hawkers by Gary Cox



Azure Damselfly pair and Blue-tailed Damselfly by Michal Miklas



Common Hawker by David Pritchard



Common Darter by Caroline Erolin



Azure Damselfly by Derek T Tabron



Common Darter by Mark Hunter

Congratulations to our winner and to all the top 12; you can celebrate these brilliant images by purchasing a 2026 calendar which will be available in our online shop soon! Thank you to everyone who entered this year, helping us to showcase the wonder of dragonflies. If you are taking photos of dragonflies don't forget to submit your records. Our website is full of information to help you identify your muse and how to submit your records.



Broad-bodied Chaser by Dave Cooper

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DRAGONFLIES; NOT AS EXPECTED

Have we misunderstood or oversimplified the effects of climate change on dragonflies? It is easy to think that climate change is just to do with increasing temperatures with British summer temperatures rising by 0.25 degrees per decade but the implications are much broader.

Written by Alan Holmes

The first Dragonflies evolved in warm climates and so, as a group, would be expected to cope with high temperatures. Adult dragonflies can survive at higher temperatures by moving into shade in hot weather. For example, the Black Darter in Germany is known to do this at a surprisingly high temperature of 33ºC. However, British records show the average temperature at which Black Darters were recorded was the same for other darter species which implies that the adults are no more or less tolerant of higher temperatures in a UK context. Only for Lesser Emperor is there evidence of flying at higher air temperatures than other species. Warmer water temperatures in spring will result in lower oxygen levels in the water and may cause stress to larvae and reduce their growth rate. This has been suspected with Black Darter. The growth rate of cold-adapted species like White-faced Darter larvae only increases threefold when the water temperature increases from 16 to 28ºC, while the warm-adapted Scarlet Darter increases 10-fold suggesting that cold-adapted species do not adapt as rapidly to higher temperatures as species more used to warmer climates. Southern species like Keeled Skimmer and Beautiful Demoiselle are now found as far north as Skye which may be permitted by the milder winters of the West Coast.



Black Darter - David Clapperton

Climate change is producing other effects, such as droughts, followed by heavy rain resulting in ponds drying out and then flooding. This can change the nature of the larval habitat. Drying out of heathland is seeing *Molinia p*urple moor-grass replace a more ecologically friendly plant community, and the Sphagnum replaced with sedges. A study in the French Alps found the length of time a pond actually contained liquid water (as opposed to frozen or dried out) critical for species like the Moorland/Common Hawker. A German study in the Palatinate region found that Moorland/Common Hawker was losing out due to a knock-on effect of drought and human extraction of water. Water extraction seems to be an increasing problem for dragonflies all over Europe. From the formerly lush Doñana wetlands in Spain to Southern Turkey, naturalists are campaigning against excess water extraction. The Environment Agency state that around 15% of rivers and lakes and 27% of groundwater bodies have abstraction rates that damage the environment yet only considers prosecution a "last option for persistent offenders".

We have just had a summer with exciting records of Red-veined Darter and Scarlet Darter, both winners in the warmer climate. But a study in southern Africa showed that Red-veined Darter larvae outcompeted Scarlet Darter by developing faster before water bodies dried out. Even among the winners, the changing climate presents challenges as well as opportunities.

Despite the stereotype of the Scottish Highlands being wet, even they are suffering from droughts. It has been thought that the Azure Hawker, while commonly found in shallow ponds, needs refuges of deeper water to survive summer drought and this may not always be available. Maybe this is why Azure Hawker and Northern Emerald tend to be found on the wetter, west side of the Highlands where drying out has been less of a risk, although this may be changing. Violent changes in water level can have a dramatic effect on species like Black Darter which require Sphagnum marginal vegetation to oviposit.

Is the ecological answer to climate change just to plant more trees, even though typically, over-shaded ponds are not good places for dragonflies? But planting trees on peatland destroys it, releasing the extensive carbon


Scarlet Darter - Alan Holmes

stores it holds. There are now major programmes to remove the trees, some planted in an earlier understanding of carbon capture, to protect heathlands. Additionally, in drought, dry peatlands release their carbon to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide (CO_2), affecting the climate, and nutrients can be washed out on rewetting, letting generalist comparative species into the habitat. For this reason, Moorland/Common Hawker and Black Darter are indicator species of a healthy, wet peatland.

If everything moves polewards together will there be no effective change and nothing to worry about? Setting aside the inability of our cities or agricultural systems to easily move, ecosystems may not move north in synchrony. Plants are not able to disperse as fast north as animal species. Some dragonflies, as adults, can often disperse long distances, but this is not possible for all species. For example, specialist species like many heathland species may not have a suitable habitat to disperse into. Another example is the Common Clubtail which is forecast to spread north in Europe but in Britain seems to be moving north hardly at all, possibly because it is limited in some way by habitat or other reasons that we do not understand.

In general, damselflies do not seem as able to disperse polewards as fast as dragonflies, being blocked by geographical barriers because they are weaker fliers. For example, of the 4 tropical species to be identified as new for Europe since 1988 only one is a damselfly; the rest are dragonflies. Even the Straits of Gibraltar are considered a major barrier to damselflies but not to dragonflies. An example closer to home is the Willow Emerald which was present in substantial populations on the French side of the channel before finally crossing into Britain and expanding rapidly 20km north, 11km south and 8 km west a year from 2010 to 2024 in what was clearly and had clearly always been suitable habitat. Dragonflies in general are more tolerant to high and low temperatures than damselflies, despite living in the same latitudes or altitudes.

Climate change is bringing forward the dragonfly season with most species emerging earlier: the old naturalists' notebooks had few records for April. This year, albeit an exceptionally early one, I had 8 records in Berkshire. And the median date of records is moving forward with the exception of the Common Darter which is also being seen later. Species that can exploit this longer flight season can oviposit for longer and potentially be more successful.

This year I was fortunate to see Scarlet Darter in Dorset where they appear to be breeding and saw one in the abdomen up “obelisk” position. Was it trying to cool down, or tell us something about our future?

THE FIRST YOUTH PANEL SUMMER GATHERING

Written by Youth Panel Member Jake Dudderidge



Jake Dudderidge

The British Dragonfly Society's Youth Panel gathering in August 2025 was as delightful as the Damselflies and Dragonflies we saw. Based at Ironbridge, Shropshire, the Youth Panel was treated to an educational weekend filled with fun, games, and wildlife.

Training from Sue Rees Evans, County Dragonfly Recorder for Shropshire, was very valuable. We gained confidence and experience in netting and handling dragonflies safely, with the wings of Ruddy and Common Darters held gently but securely between two fingers. Identification was explored, and we were quizzed throughout the day. On Saturday, we visited Pam's Pools. Exploring a place so committed to nature was a marvellous opportunity packed with surprises. Froglets and a chorus of grasshoppers and bush crickets complemented sightings of adorable damselflies, majestic Migrant and Brown Hawkers. Some native European Hornets (*Vespa crabro*) were seen – I even managed to catch and release one without issue. The spotlight though, most likely goes to the pair of White Storks that soared high above Pam's Pools. These prehistoric-looking giants caused much excitement within the group. Though they were likely from a local wildlife park in the county rather than truly wild birds, the sight of these amazing creatures in the skies of Shropshire remains one of the weekend's highlights! Small Coppers, Common Blue butterflies,



Sue Rees-Evans sharing her knowledge - Tim Coleshaw



and a Clouded Yellow butterfly added equally wonderful moments to our time with hawkers, a Ruddy Darter in the hand, Crayfish remains, and two Longhorn cattle at Pam's Pools. We went back to the cabin, set up tables, and enjoyed lunch, featuring Shropshire grown melons!

Later, we visited a couple of water bodies, including Seggy Pool, near Dudmaston Estate. The members of the Youth Panel were in for a wonderful gem. Learning that Willow Emerald Damselflies (*Chalcolestes viridis*) had been first recorded in Shropshire within the last few weeks, and then finding our first ones within minutes, was incredible! That I may have been among, if not the first person, to net one of this species in Shropshire, was an added surprise. More Willow Emeralds were found, plus a Heron, a Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Damselflies, Brown Hawkers, and amphibians were encountered at Seggy Pool. Froglets were so abundant that we had to be careful where we stepped near the path edges, and a few toadlets were among the vegetation too. I showed the group one of each safely (for the amphibian!) in a clear container and discussed the differences between the two before releasing them. The records of these adorable animals would be of value, with the toadlet records sent to the Travelling Toadlets project.



Investigating a Common Darter - Jake Dudderidge

"Willow Emerald had been first recorded in the area within the last few weeks"

Quiz night at the hostel saw two teams compete in an Odonata themed pub quiz. Movies, music, and general knowledge questions led to the prize of chocolate after a tie breaker decided by others at the hostel on which team had the best name. On the final day, we visited The Beeches and Lodge Field Local Nature Reserve. Pond dipping saw many delightful pond dwellers be examined under hand lenses, microscopes, and keen eyes, and multiple attempts to catch adult Odonata were made, and some were successful. Darters netted were held safely, photographed, and released. We then finished with a visit to Ironbridge Gorge, with ice cream, dragonflies, and a wonderful view to end the trip.



Willow Emerald Damselfly - Tim Coleshaw

This weekend was a wonderful opportunity to meet with fellow youth panel and BDS members and share our love of damselflies, dragonflies, and nature in general, to learn more about these insects and spend time in nature gaining knowledge, skills, and treasured memories.

FIELD NOTES

May emerging Common Hawkers in North Cumbria
Written by David Clarke



Newly emerged Common Hawker taken by Jack Dryden

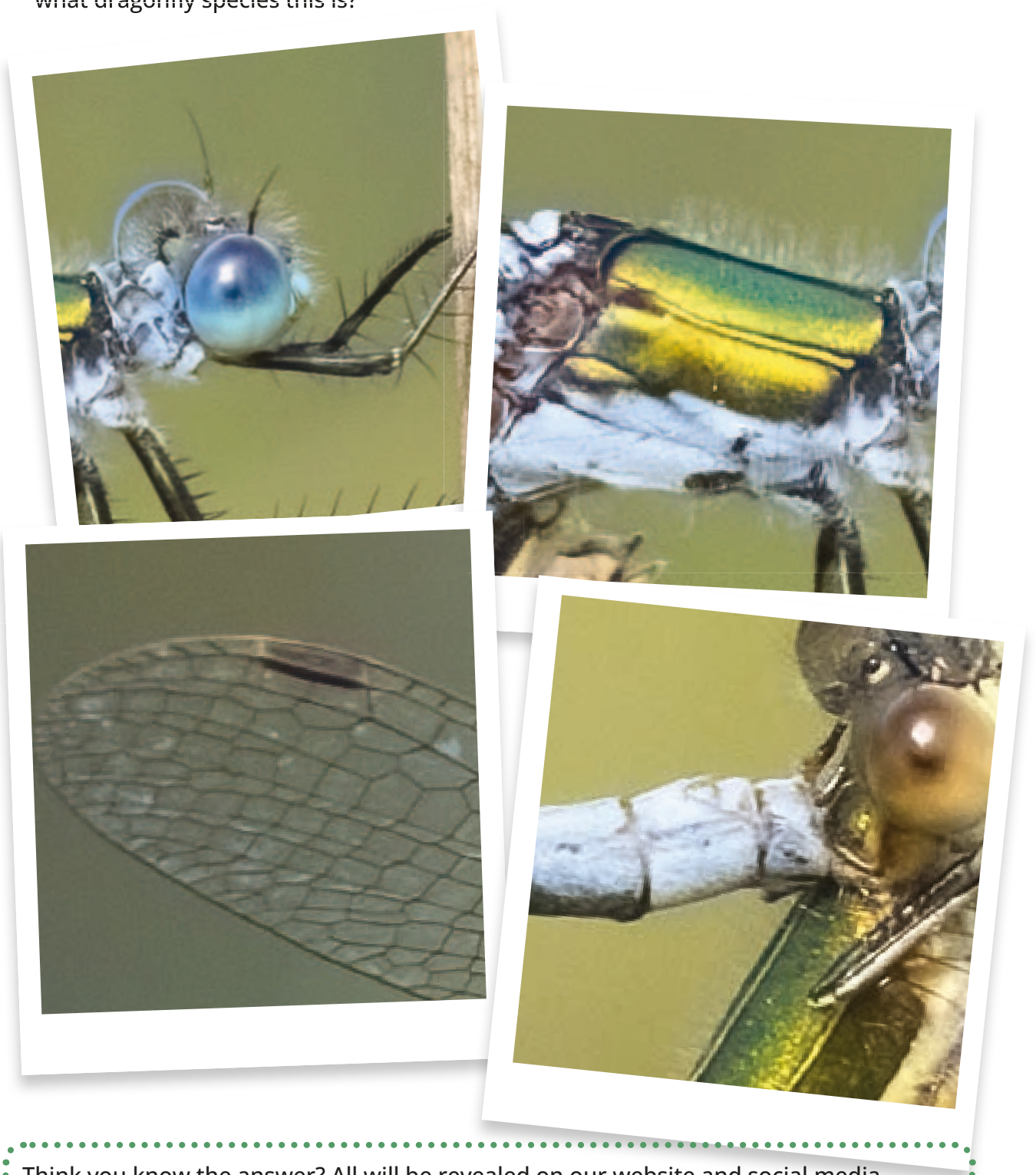
A survey on 23rd May 2025 at Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Eycott Hill Reserve near Penrith in the north of the county yielded two fresh exuviae of Common Hawker. It is not unusual to find occasional exuviae of this species that have survived from the previous season. However, in such cases they have turned a light straw colour - with an almost ghost-like appearance - and have often become degraded (top specimen in the image below). Those found on 23rd May, however, were dark-coloured (lower specimen) and clearly fresh, and in one instance, the emerger was present too. These seem to be the earliest ever amongst the past decade of records of adults of this species, which total over 600. On 18th June, Common Hawkers were emerging at this site, and at least 30 exuviae were found. Possibly the long warm April and May had just triggered these exceptional emergences. The species' peak flight period is normally in July and August!

Don't forget to submit your dragonfly records to help monitor emergence dates for dragonflies across the UK.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Time to test your dragonfly knowledge! From these zoomed in snippets can you guess what dragonfly species this is?



Think you know the answer? All will be revealed on our website and social media channels - follow us on social media to be the first to know!

Photo credit: David Clapperton

ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE 2025

This year we will be holding our AGM and conference as two separate online events, and we would love to see you there!

The British Dragonfly Society Annual General Meeting - held online
Date: Wednesday 12th November 2025
Time: 7pm-8pm

All our members are invited to participate in our AGM to hear the Trustees' report of the charity's performance, finances, and activities, and to elect new Trustees.

The AGM will be followed by a talk on the Dragonflies on the Bog BDS project by Emma Stevens-Veitch (Project Officer).

Dragonfly Online Meeting - join us for a day of talks and discussion
Date: Saturday 15th November 2025
Time: 10:30am - 4pm

Confirmed speakers include:

Laura Weldon PhD (Founder, The eDNA Consultancy) ~ Applications of eDNA as a wildlife monitoring tool.

Lukus Robbins (WWT Creative Content Producer) and Hannah Boyes
(WWT Senior Visitor Marketing Manager) ~ The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust's Dragonfly Festival, a summer celebration of dragonflies.

South West Peatland Partnership ~ Restoring peatlands across Cornwall, Dartmoor and Exmoor.


Emma Stevens-Veitch


Festival of Nature in collaboration with WWT - Ania Shrimpton

Registration is required for both events; visit our events page for more information and to register for your place.



Leave a Lasting Legacy

A legacy to the British Dragonfly Society will provide a lasting gift. Dragonflies and damselflies are beautiful insects which have inhabited Earth for over 300 million years. With your support, by remembering the British Dragonfly Society in your will, we can safeguard our dragonflies and damselflies to provide a lasting legacy that will ensure future generations enjoy these fascinating insects.

A Gift in Memory

Celebrating and commemorating the life of your loved one with a gift in their memory is a fitting tribute that helps to support our work for Dragonflies and Damselflies. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a lasting difference, helping to protect these incredible insects and their wetland habitats.

If you would like more information about leaving a legacy, please get in touch by sending an email to membership@british-dragonflies.org.uk or by writing to our PO Box.

FUTURE **CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES**

All magazine contributions should be sent via email to the magazine editor, Lauren Kennedy. If you would like to discuss a potential article please email and you will be provided with advice on content, presentation and format.

Deadlines for contributions:
Spring edition: 31st January
Autumn edition: 31st July

By contributing to Dragonfly News you give permission for the work to be used in other formats with the same attribution including reproduction on the BDS website. Articles on any aspect of UK dragonfly fauna are encouraged and contributions on European and other global species are also considered. We also welcome stories of volunteering, community work and engaging people with dragonflies and wetlands.

Please send all enquires and contributions via email. Articles should be sent in a word document format with accompanying images sent separately, rather than embedded within the document. Images should be jpeg or png files and as high quality as possible. If files are too large to send via email please use a file sharing service such as WeTransfer, GDrive or DropBox. It is recommended to get in touch to discuss word limits. The editor reserves the right to make changes to text, and will endeavour to contact the author if extensive editing is required.

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