

ODONATA RECORDS FOR 2004

J M Cheverton

With observer effort assessed as similar to that of recent years the total numbers recorded for most species this season were lower than for many years. Of the damselflies only the Common Blue *Enallagma cyathigerum* occurred in an average number while there were large decreases in the numbers of the Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo*, Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*, Large Red *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*, Blue-tailed *Ischnura elegans* and Azure *Coenagrion puella*. Of the dragonflies only the Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta* and Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* were recorded in expected numbers while the Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* and Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* were particularly scarce. The only migrants recorded were a single Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii* and a male Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*.

Systematic List

Calopteryx virgo (Beautiful Demoiselle)

The total recorded this year was 61, a much smaller number than that for last year but not much less than the average for the previous five years. All were seen at "Wild Tracts", Shalfleet (SZ4189), the first on 4th May (VG) and the last on 19th August (VG).

Calopteryx splendens (Banded Demoiselle)

The total recorded was 65, a large decrease on the numbers for recent years and the lowest since 1994. The first, three males, were seen at the Yar at Brading (SZ616869) on 18th May (DD) and the last, a female, at Merstone Manor Farm reservoir (SZ515855) on 31st July (DD).

Lestes sponsa (Emerald Damselfly)

Thirty-two were recorded, all at Longlands disused reservoir, Apse (SZ560819), on 25th July (DD).

Platynemesis pennipes (White-legged Damselfly)

None have been reported since 1992.

Pyrrhosoma nymphula (Large Red Damselfly)

An even poorer year than the last with only 125 recorded compared with 205 in 2003, 388 in 2002 and 781 in 2001. The first were seen at the Education Site in Parkhurst Forest (SZ470913) and in a Wroxall garden (SZ5580) on 24th April (DD) and the last in a ditch south of Corve Farm (SZ478800) on 24th July (DD).

Ischnura elegans (Blue-tailed Damselfly)

This was another poor year with only 312 reported. Most observers saw very few and reported concern for the species. The first was seen in a garden at Westhill, Shanklin (SZ576810) on 3rd May (JMC) and the last at Ford Farm reservoir (SZ514796) on 1st September (DD)

Enallagma cyathigerum (Common Blue Damselfly)

This species remains widespread and common with at least 3490 individuals seen. The first was recorded at Berrycroft Farm ponds (SZ514804) on 17th May (DD) and the last at Whitwell SZ5277 on 4th September (DD).

Coenagrion pulchellum (Variable Damselfly)

None reported since 1997.

J M CHEVERTON

Coenagrion puella (Azure Damselfly)

The total of 417 individuals reported was the lowest since 1993. The first was seen at Stenbury Manor main pond (SZ524789) on 17th May (DD) and the last near Wellow (SZ3887) on 2nd September (VG).

Erythromma viridulum (Small Red-eyed Damselfly)

This species, which arrived in the Island in 2000, has maintained its foothold and, up until 2002, had increased in number. However, the total of 521 individuals recorded this year was smaller again for the second year running. The first was seen at Godshill Park Farm ponds (SZ535806) on 12th July (DD) and the last at Sandown Canoe Lake (SZ606847) on 31st August (DD).

Erythromma najas (Red-eyed Damselfly)

Two males were seen at Parsonage Peat Pond (SZ5685) on 30th July (DD). This is the second record for the Island, the first having been made in 2001.

Brachytron pratense (Hairy Dragonfly)

A total of six was recorded at Brading Marsh on 2nd June with two males at SZ631876, three sex not recorded at SZ628876 and one male at SZ621874 (DD).

Aeshna juncea (Common Hawker)

None recorded this year.

Aeshna grandis (Brown Hawker)

None recorded this year.

Aeshna cyanea (Southern Hawker)

Another poor year with only 72 reported, the lowest number since 1996. The first was seen at Walters Copse (SZ4390) on 21st June (AJLB) and the last near Dodnor (SZ5090) on 18th October (DTB)..

Aeshna mixta (Migrant Hawker)

An average year with 160 individuals reported. The first was seen in a garden at Gurnard (SZ476954) on 10th July (DTB) and the last at Seagrove Bay (SZ6391) on 24th October (JMC).

Anax imperator (Emperor Dragonfly)

Fewer than in most years with only 144 recorded. The first was seen at Locks Farm (SZ447907) on 23rd May (BJA) and the last at Whitwell (SZ5277) on 4th September (DD).

Anax parthenope (Lesser Emperor)

A male of this rare migrant species was observed for about 30 minutes at Merstone Manor Farm reservoir (SZ515855) on 31st July (DD).

Cordulegaster boltonii (Golden-ringed Dragonfly)

Following the large number recorded in last year's survey, the 24 noted this year marked a return to more usual totals. The first was seen at Garrets Farm (SZ5187) on 2nd June (JMC), the earliest date since recording started in 1978, and the last at Wydcombe (SZ5087) on 1st September (DD).

Cordulia aenea (Downy Emerald)

None reported this year..

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Libellula depressa (Broad-bodied Chaser)

The worst year since 1993 with only 55 individuals reported. The first was seen at “Wild Tracts”, Shalfleet, (SZ4189) on 8th May (VG) and the last at Walter’s Copse (SZ4390) on 18th July (BJA).

Libellula quadrimaculata (Four-spotted Chaser)

The first, a very mature specimen, was seen flying west along the coast at Thorness Bay (SZ4593) on 23rd May (DD). There were ten more sightings, all at Brading Marsh, eight at SZ631876 on 2nd June (DD) and two at SZ6387 on 21st June (JMC).

Orthetrum coerulescens (Keeled Skimmer)

Three individuals were reported, all on the cliff-top at Whale Chine (SZ467783), one on 5th June (BR) and a male and a female on 7th June (DTB).

Orthetrum cancellatum (Black-tailed Skimmer)

Another good year with 251 individuals reported. The first were seen at Parkhurst Forest (SZ4789) on 20th May (AJLB) and the last at Waytes Court Farm reservoir (SZ431824) on 2nd September (DD).

Sympetrum fonscolombii (Red-veined Darter)

There was one record of this scarce migrant. A male was seen at Atherfield Green Farm reservoir (SZ466797) on 28th June (DD).

Sympetrum striolatum (Common Darter)

This was a poor year for this dragonfly with only 300 individuals reported, the lowest number since 1996. The first was seen at Brading Marsh Reserve (SZ6387) on 21st June (JMC) and the last at Long Lane (SZ529890) on 17th November (DD).

Sympetrum sanguineum (Ruddy Darter)

Another extremely poor year with only 47 individuals reported. The first was seen at Brading Marsh Reserve (SZ6387) on 21st June (JMC) and the last at “Wild Tracts”, Shalfleet (SZ4189) on 8th September (VG).

Observers

I thank the following observers who have contributed records, only a small number of which are shown above.

Mr B J Angell (BJA)

Dr D T Biggs (DTB)

Mr A J L Butler (AJLB)

Mrs E Butler (EB)

Mr M Cahill (MC)

Mr D Dana (DD)

Ms P Gaylor (PG)

Ms V Gwynn (VG)

Mr S Knill-Jones (SK-J)

Mr J D Ralph (JDR)

Mr B Ransom (BR)

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