

ODONATA RECORDS FOR 2005

J M Cheverton

Most damselfly species had a good year. The Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo*, Large Red Damselfly *Pyrhosoma nymphula*, Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* and Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* all showed large increases on the low numbers recorded in 2004 while the Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* showed some improvement. The count of the Small Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma viridulum* was the largest yet recorded while the numbers recorded of the Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*, a recent discovery, continued to increase and the localities spread. Dragonfly numbers were, in the main, greatly improved on those for 2004. The Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea* recovered well from the low number recorded then as did the Emperor *Anax imperator*. The Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* and Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* showed some increase but very few Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* were seen. For the scarcer species there was a welcome increase in sightings of the Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense* and the Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea*. Three scarce migrants were recorded: one Yellow-winged Darter *Sympetrum flaveolum* and two Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*.

Systematic List

Calopteryx virgo (Beautiful Demoiselle)

The total recorded this year was 135, the second highest number since the first were recorded in 1989. Most were seen at "Wild Tracts", Shalfleet (SZ4189), the first on 3rd May (VG) and the last on 15th August (VG). A few were recorded along the Caul Bourne between Shalfleet and Homestead Farm (SZ4188).

Calopteryx splendens (Banded Demoiselle)

The total recorded was 155, an increase on the number for last year but still lower than for most years in the last decade. The first, a female, was seen at Holliers Farm (SZ552831) on 8th June (DD), the latest first sighting since 1996. The last was seen at Godshill (SZ523831), near the River Yar, on 16th August (DD).

Lestes sponsa (Emerald Damselfly)

The total recorded was 50 with the first at Longlands disused farm reservoir (SZ560819) on 11th July (DD) and the last at Clamerkin National Trust pond (SZ439909) on 6th September (JMC). This sighting was the latest since recording commenced in 1978.

Platycnemis pennipes (White-legged Damselfly)

Not reported since 1992.

Pyrhosoma nymphula (Large Red Damselfly)

A slightly better year than last with 172 recorded compared with 205 in 2003, 388 in 2002 and 781 in 2001. The first, a male, was seen at "Wild Tracts", Shalfleet (SZ4189) on 20th April (VG) and the last at Luccombe Cliff pond (SZ584795) on 8th July (DD)..

Ischnura elegans (Blue-tailed Damselfly)

This was a much better year than the last with a total of 1076 recorded, the third highest since 1978. The first were seen at Medina Valley Centre (SZ5090) on 17th May (KM) and the last at Thorness Marsh (SZ459931) on 3rd September (DD).

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Enallagma cyathigerum (Common Blue Damselfly)

This species remains widespread and common with at least 4639 individuals seen this year. The first was recorded at Clamerkin National Trust pond (SZ439909) on 27th May (JMC) and the last at Atherfield Green Farm reservoir (SZ466797) on 25th September (DD), the latest date so far.

Coenagrion pulchellum (Variable Damselfly)

None reported since 1997.

Coenagrion puella (Azure Damselfly)

The total number recorded was 2030 marking a return to the range of figures noted for most of the years since 1994, after two years with very low numbers. The first was seen at Locks Farm (SZ444909) on 2nd May (BJA) and the last at a pond under Gatcliff (SZ535805) on 17th August (DD).

Erythromma viridulum (Small Red-eyed Damselfly)

After two relatively poor years the 1269 recorded this year was the highest number since the species arrived in 2000. The first was seen at a private pond at Little Princelett (SZ560829) on 11th July (DD) and the last at Merstone Fishing Lakes (SZ533838) on 30th August (DD).

Erythromma najas (Red-eyed Damselfly)

After the first sighting in 2001 this species appears to be spreading in small numbers. However, it is possible that it has been overlooked in the past. Twelve were recorded this year. The first, four males, were seen at Dickson's Copse pond (SZ500916) on 20th July (KM) and the last at Langbridge Farm reservoir (SZ556861) on 16th August (DD).

Brachytron pratense (Hairy Dragonfly)

The total number recorded was 17, the highest since the first was noted at Brading Marsh in 2001. As the more recent sightings at new localities do not appear to have radiated from Brading Marsh it is possible that this is another species that may have been overlooked in the past. This year the first was seen at Clamerkin National Trust pond (SZ439909) on 27th May (JMC) and the last at the same place on 9th June (BJA).

Aeshna juncea (Common Hawker)

Two pairs were seen ovipositing at Carisbrooke pond (SZ4887) on 24th September (KM). The last record of this locally uncommon species was in 2003

Aeshna grandis (Brown Hawker)

There were two records this year: one at Pondacre Farm (SZ456892) on 21st June (BJA) and a female at Afton Marsh (SZ3486) on 29th August (JMC).

Aeshna cyanea (Southern Hawker)

After a poor showing last year this species has recovered well with 158 recorded this year, the second highest total since recording commenced in 1978. The first was seen at Ningwood Common (SZ392894) on 11th June (CD) and the last at Gurnard (SZ476954) on 27th October (DTB).

Aeshna mixta (Migrant Hawker)

A good year with 229 individuals reported, the second highest number since the first was recorded in 1979. The first was seen at America Wood (SZ566823) on 30th July (DD) and the last at Locks Copse (SZ4490) on 27th October (BJA).

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Anax imperator (Emperor Dragonfly)

This was a good year with 210 recorded. The first was seen at Clamerkin National Trust pond (SZ439909) on 27th May (JMC) and the last at "Wild Tracts", Shalfleet (SZ4189) on 10th October (VG).

Cordulegaster boltonii (Golden-ringed Dragonfly)

An average year with 28 recorded. The first was seen at Blackgang lower cliff mud-slide (SZ484769) on 21st June (DD) and the last ovipositing in a garden at Westhill, Shanklin (SZ576810) on 22nd September (JMC).

Libellula depressa (Broad-bodied Chaser)

The number recorded was 76, higher than for last year, but still below the average of 101 for the last ten years. The first was seen at Parkhurst Forest Field Study Centre (SZ470913) on 12th May (DD) and the last at Yaverland Marsh (SZ608852) on 11th August (DD).

Libellula quadrimaculata (Four-spotted Chaser)

None reported this year..

Orthetrum coerulescens (Keeled Skimmer)

As a result of an increase in the number of visits to the cliffs in the Chale Bay area, the 109 individuals recorded this year was the second highest number since the colony was rediscovered by BJA in 1983. The first were seen there at SZ470913 on 19th June (KM) and the last on a ledge east of Walpen Chine (SZ4777) on 19th August (DD, KM).

Orthetrum cancellatum (Black-tailed Skimmer)

Another good year with 452 individuals reported, the second highest number since 1978. The first, a female, was seen at Clamerkin National Trust pond (SZ439909) on 27th May (JMC) and the last at Atherfield Green Farm reservoir (SZ466797) on 2nd September (DD).

Sympetrum flaveolum (Yellow-winged Darter)

A male of this scarce migrant species was seen at a cliff ledge near Luccombe Steps (SZ583793) on 31st August (DD). This was the first record since 1995.

Sympetrum fonscolombii (Red-veined Darter)

There were two records of this scarce migrant. One was seen near Luccombe steps (SZ583793) on 7th August (DD) and the other at Meadow Farm reservoir, Bathingbourne (SZ544831) on 8th August (DD).

Sympetrum striolatum (Common Darter)

This was a much better year for this dragonfly with 562 individuals reported. The first was seen at the pond at the MoD Range, Newtown, (SZ441909) on 27th June (BJA) and the last at the same locality on 20th November (JWW).

Sympetrum sanguineum (Ruddy Darter)

A slightly better year with 63 individuals recorded. The first was at Thorness Farm pond (SZ437810) on 6th July (DD) and the last at "Wild Tracts", Shalfleet (SZ4189) on 18th September (VG).

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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)
Mrs C Dudley (CD)	Ms V Gwynn (VG)	Mr S Knill-Jones (S K-J)
Mr D Longe (DL)	Mr K Marston (KM)	Mr B Ransom (BR)
Mr D Tucker (DT)	Mr J W Willmott (JWW).	

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