

North Wales Dragonfly Newsletter No. 44. 9th June 2010.

Hi all,



We'll, we did have a short spell of ideal weather!

Clubtail surveys on the River Dee

Annual Clubtail (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*) surveys along the Welsh bank of the Dee were carried out in mid-May in 1 km square SH4153. On the 18 May Emma Broad and Adrian Lloyd Jones walked for 300 m upriver of the new road bridge at Holt and saw about 43 exuviae and adults. On the following day Neil Frisewell walked a similar stretch downriver of the bridge and saw 19 adults; all except a teneral female were males in various stages of maturity. He also found 2 exuviae.

Scarce Bluetail rediscovered – a successful trip to Cors Bodgynydd, 30 May 2010

The North Wales Wildlife Trust's Cors Bodgynydd Nature Reserve [SH7659] in the Gwydyr Forest is an important SSSI bog and a premier dragonfly site with 16 recorded, and probable breeding, species of Odonata, one more than Cors Goch NNR. It has seepage-fed acidic bog pools in the north [SH766595] and a peaty, shallowly dammed Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd in the south [SH768590], with mire and birch scrub in between. It also includes an excellent small mature reservoir in the north [SH765596] known as Llyn Bodgynydd Bach. Llyn Bodgynydd itself is a cold, deep, open water reservoir not included in the reserve. These relatively tranquil places can be accessed from parking places along the narrow road down to noisy, popular Llyn Geirionydd.

I have made many visits to different parts of the reserve over the last few years. The species of damselfly that all the reserve's standing water bodies have in common are: Common Emerald Damsel or Spreadwing, Large Red Damsel, Common Bluet, Azure Bluet and Common Bluetail; the dragonflies are Common or Moorland Hawker, Blue Emperor, Four-spotted Chaser, Keeled Skimmer, Black Darter and Common Darter. In addition a few Broad-bodied Chasers have been seen at the Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd and Southern Hawker at Llyn Bodgynydd Bach. Black Darter and Common Bluet can be seen in huge numbers at the latter locality during July. In addition the Common Goldenring breeds along streamlets such as the inlet to Llyn Bodgynydd Bach.

On this occasion I had specifically gone to the bog to look for two rare damsel species that had previously been recorded from the reserve. The Variable Bluet (*C. pulchellum*) occurs there according to the NWWT's site literature but the only record I can find is that R. P. Bray found at least one adult at 'Llynnau Bodgynydd' [SH7659] in 1974 which was determined by J. Rees. Three adults of Scarce or Small Bluetail (*I. pumilio*) were found at Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd in July 1994 by Mike Howe but the species has not been seen there since. Both species are a long way from any other occurrences.

Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd has a fringed of Bottle Sedge bordered by a broad zone of Bog Myrtle and heath that merges with young birch and then conifer forest. To my amazement the first damselfly I came across on approaching the lake through the forest was an immature female *pumilio* in its orange *aurantiaca* phase. I then saw four males in various stages of maturity.

One was an uncoloured teneral that had only just emerged (see photos). I also came across several males of the similar Common Bluetail (*Ischnura elegans*).



Female *Ischnura pumilio* teneral phase *aurantiaca*, Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd, 30th May 2010. Photo A. Brandon.

Bluets were fairly common in the lake area. They comprised emerging and mature Common Bluet (*E. cyathigerum*) and Azure Bluet (*C. puella*). Sadly I didn't find any Variable Bluet anywhere in the reserve to confirm its current status but a double hit would have been too much to hope for.

Keeled Skimmer (all immature) and Four-spotted Chaser were also common at the lake and farther north at the bog pools and many skimmers were in the process of emerging low down in close proximity to the water (see photo). At the northern extremity of the reserve the bog water seeps out from old mine workings and must carry a significant level of heavy metal pollution. The mine dumps are rich in sphalerite (zinc sulphide) and the bog is orange with the hydrated oxides of iron. Yet, amazingly, this is exactly where Keeled Skimmer (*O. coerulescens*) and Four spotted Chaser (*L. quadrimaculata*) choose to breed and I collected 20 skimmer and 3 chaser exuviae from here. These were conspicuously stained orange presumably with the iron compounds.

Common Bluet was numerous in an open water situation at Llyn Bodgynydd Bach in the north but no Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*), which are normally profuse here, had yet emerged.



Male *Ischura pumilio*, Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd, 30th May 2010. Photo A. Brandon.



Teneral male *Ischura pumilio*, Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd, 30th May 2010. Photo A. Brandon.



Emergent female *Orthetrum coerulescens* on its exuvia,
Llyn Tyn-y-mynydd, 30 May 2010. Photo A. Brandon.

Black-tailed Skimmer at a Rhuddlan pond

Simon Hughes photographed this immature adult male Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) at a small pond [SJ O33 777] south-east of Rhuddlan on the 5th June. It must have bred at the pond or nearby and it is a new record for the 10 km square.



Immature male *Orthetrum cancellatum*, Ruddlan pond,
5th June 2010. Photo Simon Hughes.



Female Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*) ovipositing at
a Bodfari pond, 4th June 2010. Photo Sue Loose.

Beautiful Demoiselle at Bodnant Gardens

The Beautiful Demoiselle (*Calopteryx virgo*) is plentiful along the streams draining the western slopes of northern Snowdonia. However, for no obvious reason both British species of demoiselle are hardly ever seen on the eastern side of the mountains along streams draining the sides of the Conwy valley. You can imagine my surprise therefore when I came across a pair of male Beautiful Demoiselle fighting in the sun at the dam in Bodnant Gardens on the 5th June.

Field trip to Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, 13th June 2010

There has been a bit of a mix up about the meeting place for next weekend's joint NWWT Arfon Branch/BDS field trip to Llyn Tecwyn Isaf and Cors Geirch. I have been promoting Llyn Tecwyn Isaf itself as the 10am rendezvous while Kate Gibbs has given the nearby NWWT Gwaith Powdwr (white gates) reserve [SH 616388] as the meeting place. Either is OK. We'll be arriving at the lake by 1015 anyway. Let's hope for some good weather.

Hairy Hawker at Llyn Tecwyn Isaf

Dick Eastwood saw about 10 Hairy Dragonfly (*Brachytron pratense*) at Llyn Tecwyn Isaf on the 5th June flying in the vegetation close to the water's edge.



Sign along the A5

Allan

Dr Allan Brandon
North Wales Dragonfly Recorder
Bryn Heilyn, Rowen, Conwy LL32 8YT.
01492 651066.
Allan@rowenconwy.wanadoo.co.uk