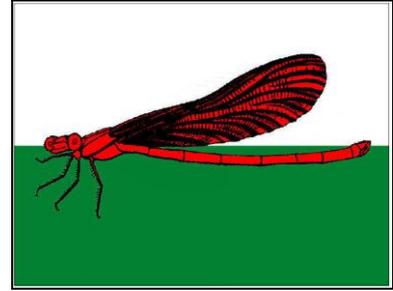


Y Fursen

**North Wales
Dragonfly
Newsletter
No. 100!**

1st July 2019



**Odonata news and events from across the vice counties of
Anglesey, Merionethshire, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire**



Hi all,

Another invasion of migrant dragonflies well underway

Please be on the alert as the warm southerly winds across Europe from North Africa are encouraging yet another wave of migrants to the UK. Adrian Parr, BDS Migrants Officer, has told me there could be 100+ adult *Sympetrum fonscolombii* (Red-veined Darter) on the move in the Wirral/Merseyside region alone over the last few days, as well as *Anax ephippiger* (Vagrant Emperor). There are, of course, more potential recorders in that region than across the North Wales coast.

Unfortunately, Adrian has been kept busy tediously tracking down photos posted in the Social Media, the only place they generally appear. These potential records would otherwise be lost to Science and are often not accompanied by the required details of location and date etc.

The currently ubiquitous Painted Lady butterflies were no doubt brought up here at the same time as the dragonfly vagrants in the same way as the February invasion.

A slightly immature adult darter seen by Hugh Ranson at Gwern Engen bog lake [SH754766], Conwy, on the 28th June is very probably *S. fonscolombii*. The other possible candidate is *Sympetrum sanguineum* (Ruddy Darter). Adrian Parr notes about the photo “A lot of the distinguishing features don't show well, but I think the pale pterostigma suggest it's *fonscolombii* (sometimes the undersides of the pterostigma can look paler than the dorsal surfaces, but in your picture we can definitely see the top of the right wing).”



Probable male *Sympetrum fonscolombii*, Gwern Engen, 28th June 2019. Photo Hugh Ranson.

Summary of sightings of Vagrant Emperor in the February invasion

The previous invasion of *Anax ephippiger* (Vagrant Emperor) in February this year was noted in newsletters 98 and 99 of the 16th and 23rd February respectively. All told six sightings were made in parts of the North Wales coast though only two of these were accompanied by confirmatory photos. The other four were deemed to be almost certainly this species as no other small hawkler fitting the descriptions would be on the wing that time of year. The sightings are:

1. John Bratton (see newsletter no. 98). 15th February 2019. Fedw Fawr [SH603820] on the northern coast of Anglesey, north of Llangoed.
2. Adam Long (see newsletter no. 99). 22nd February 2019. Beach at Abersoch [SH31492777], Llyn. Fine photos taken.
3. Asha Jones 23rd February 2019. Llyn coastal path somewhere between the end of Porth Ysgaden closest to Morfa Nefyn and Porth Towyn [SH2237].
4. Sue Loose. 26th February 2019. Ynys Y Fydlyn [SH290917], south of Carmel Head, Anglesey.
5. Andrew Peterken 26th February 2019. Hawking along the strandline and dunes, Morfa Harlech [c. SH560333]. See photo below.
6. John Hicks 27th February 2019. Marine Drive along the northern coast of Great Orme [SH7684].



Anax ephippiger male, Morfa Harlech, 26th February 2019. Photo Andrew Peterken.

Tom Knight's Gomphus survey of the Dee

Tom reports that he did his first Clubtail Count on the 31st May north of Bangor on Dee [SJ3946] and recorded 6 exuviae and one emerging adult (see photo). He saw plenty of *Calopteryx splendens* (Banded Demoiselles) and a few *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* (Large Reds) but not much else as the weather was far from optimal.



Emergent *Gomphus vulgatissimus*, Bangor on Dee, 31st May 2019. Photo Tom Knight.

Dragonflies of a Celtic Rainforest Lake - Llyn Tecwyn Isaf field meeting, 22nd June 2019

I led this meeting in conjunction with Llinos Alun of Snowdonia National Park to help promote the concept of “Celtic Rainforest” in Merionethshire. Llyn Tecwyn Isaf was chosen because its fringing remnant of oak forest allows *Cordulia aenea* (Downy Emerald) to survive there, the only known location for the species in North Wales. Its larvae live in the decaying leaf debris. The lake is beautiful enough in poor weather but we were blessed with an exceptionally warm and sunny day and saw lots of dragonflies, one species new to the lake – *Libellula depressa*, present at a poorly vegetated, shallow, clayey Sphagnum pool on the east side of the lake along with *Orthetrum coerulescens*.

Attendees: Asha Jones from Criccieth, Malcolm Watling from Blenau Ffestiniog, Mike and Linda Averill from Kidderminster, Pete Heywood from Wrexham, Eddie Urbanski from the Llyn, Simon Hughston-Roberts from RSPB & Caernarfon, Llinos Alun from SNP, Allan Brandon from Rowen, Richard Glynne Jones from Conwy, and a lady from a lovely cottage nearby who was also giving away rhubarb!

Species list: 11 of the 16 breeding species were recorded. It was noteworthy that two of the species that could be common at the lake had not yet emerged - *Lestes sponsa* (Common Spreadwing or Emerald Damsel) and *Sympetrum danae* (Black Darter). *Ceriagrion tenellum* was present in numbers. Eddie ‘the eagle-eye’ spotted the only *Brachytron pratense* of the day, an ovipositing female. He also saw two male *Anax imperator* from a distance. Mike Averill saw the only *Cordulia aenea* flying past.

The species seen were:

Large Red Damsel [*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*]
Small Red Damsel [*Ceriagrion tenellum*]
Common Bluets or Blue Damsel [*Enallagma cyathigerum*]
Azure Bluets or Damsel [*Coenagrion puella*]
Common Bluetail or Blue-tailed Damsel [*Ischnura elegans*]
Hairy Hawker or Dragonfly [*Brachytron pratense*]
Blue Emperor or Emperor Dragonfly [*Anax imperator*]
Downy Emerald [*Cordulia aenea*]
Keeled Skimmer [*Orthetrum coerulescens*]
Four-spotted Chaser [*Libellula quadrimaculata*]
Broad-bodied Chaser [*Libellula depressa*]

After people had drifted off about 4 pm I walked over to an area of oak woodland where, several years ago, I remember finding a patch of Oak Fern and I wanted to add the record to Cofnod. I failed to find it but on the way back I asked an angler fishing from a boat what fish he was catching and he told me Common Carp and Mirror Carp. I had understood that the lake, which has no environmental protection whatsoever, had been stocked with the largely vegetarian Grass Carp so I was taken aback by the news. The future of the Downy Emerald must be under threat by the introduction of these largely invertebrate-eating fish species.



West side of Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, 22nd June 2019. Photo Malcolm Watling.



Ovipositing *Brachytriton pratense*, Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, 22nd June 2019. Photo Malcolm Watling.



Details of secondary genitalia of male *Libellula quadrimaculata*, Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, 22nd June 2019. Photo Malcolm Watling.

Tom Knight was passing Llyn Tecwyn Isaf on the 28th June and within 30 minutes managed to see 2 or 3 *Cordulia* flying.



Anax imperator (Blue Emperor) emerging from Les Starling's garden pond at on the 11th June 2019. Photo Les Starling. The dragonfly is in the resting hanging state.

Please remember that all back copies of this newsletter can be found on the Cofnod website home page by clicking 'View all news' box and searching 'dragonfly' in 'Search news'.

Allan

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