

No 29. 11th Mar 2009

Hi all,

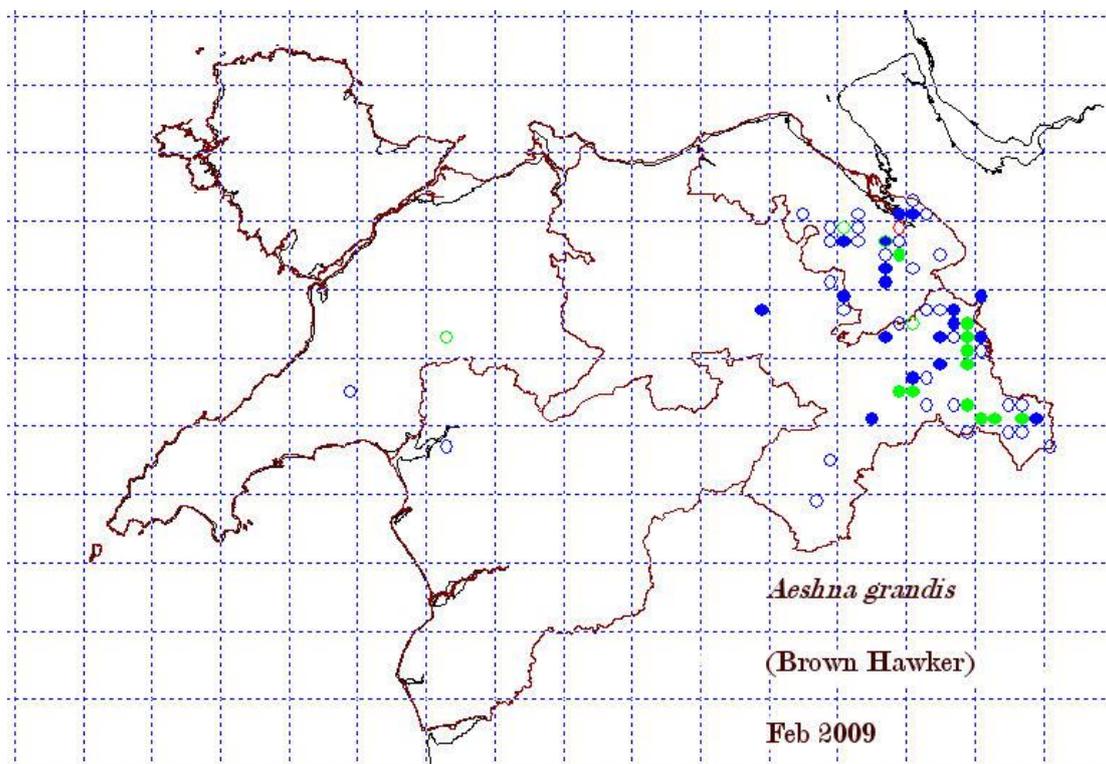


### **New Welsh names for our odonates**

Duncan Brown has prepared a new list of Welsh names for British Odonata species and hopes to publish it later this year in Vol. 3 in the series of Welsh species names. In the meantime, if you wish to find out a new Welsh name it can be found on [www.llennatur.com](http://www.llennatur.com). Click GEIRIADUR ENWAU A THERMAU then do a search for the species in English and it should come up with the Welsh one. For example, Azure Damsel is *mursen las asur*.

### **Brown Hawkers (*Aeshna grandis*) in Caernarfon, Merioneth and Anglesey – Migrants from Ireland?**

The Brown Hawker is common and widely distributed throughout lowland Britain but is rare in the far north of England and Scotland, and also in western regions such as Devon and Cornwall and most of Wales. You will see from the distribution map below that its range extends solidly into Flintshire and east Denbighshire but that there are only scant older records farther west.



It breeds in a wide variety of standing and slow-flowing waters, especially garden and fish ponds, lakes, canals and gravel pits. So its reluctance to colonise westerly regions is rather puzzling especially since it is widespread in Ireland.

I have long doubted the veracity of the few westerly North Wales sightings and thought it more likely that they were misidentified Common or Moorland Hawker (*A. juncea*) occurrences. The female of this latter species is generally brown and it can also have quite amber-tinted wings. See for example this photo of a dead specimen taken by Huw Jenkins at Cwm Corsiog, Blennau Ffestiniog in August 2008.



Female *Aeshna juncea*, Cwm Corsiog. Photo Huw Jenkins

However, two of the old records are of netted larvae/nymphs from the Beddgelert – Capel Curig area, dating from 1963 (J Hobart) and 1971 (M J Morgan), so there should really be no reason to doubt their identification except that the larvae of two species are also rather similar.

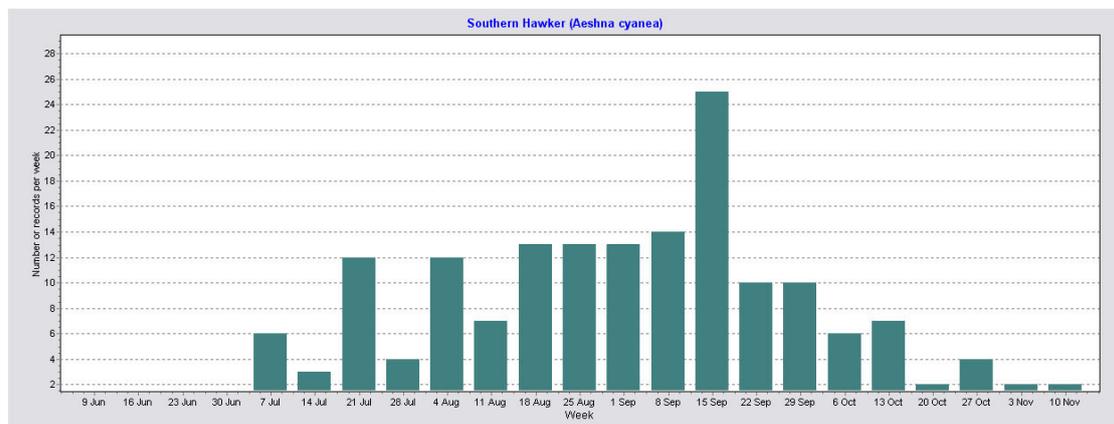
John Hickton witnessed an extraordinary event on the afternoon 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2006. From his garden on the coastal plain between Abergele and Kinmel Bay he observed, in 3 hours, between 200 and 300 ‘brown’ hawks flying towards the east against a slight breeze. There were also 4 or 5 tandem pairs. John is a keen birder and had only then ‘got into’ odonates but he thought they were Brown Hawks as he couldn’t see any blue on them. If this was a ‘mass migration’ I don’t know of a similar one taking place in North Wales and I was reluctant to accept them as Brown Hawks given the scarcity of the species in western Denbighshire and its supposed lack of any migratory tendency. I suspected they may have been Common Hawks (also not known to migrate), or even Migrant Hawks (*A. mixta*) going in the wrong direction, but it did

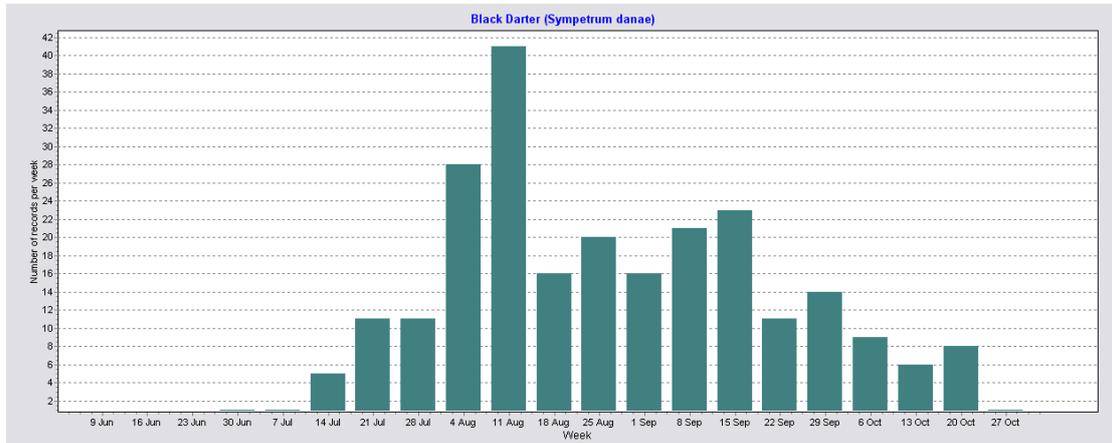
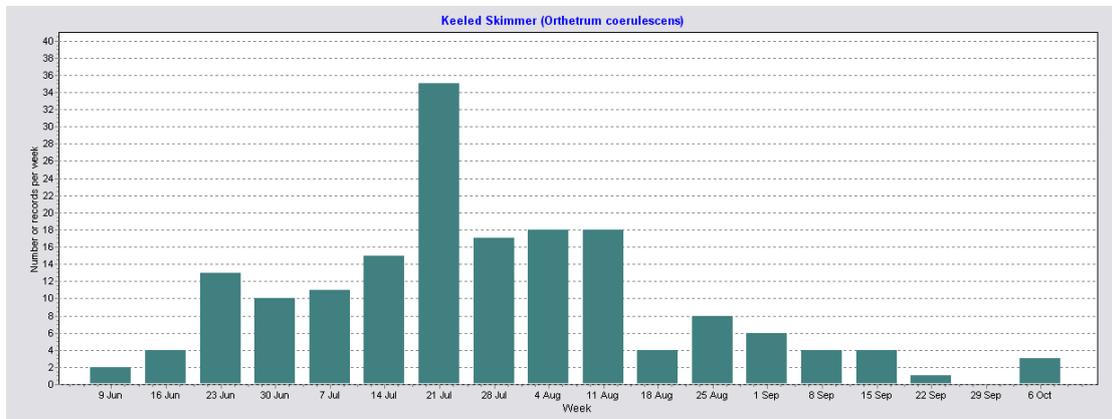
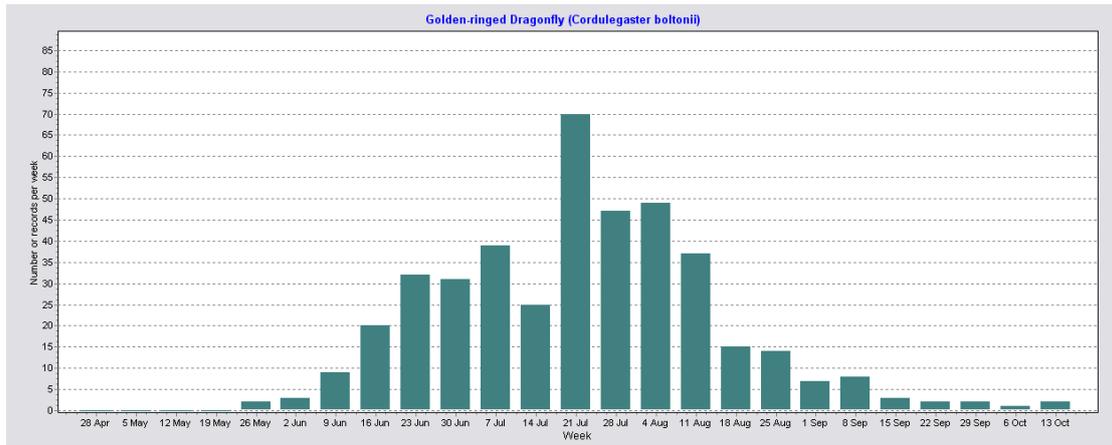
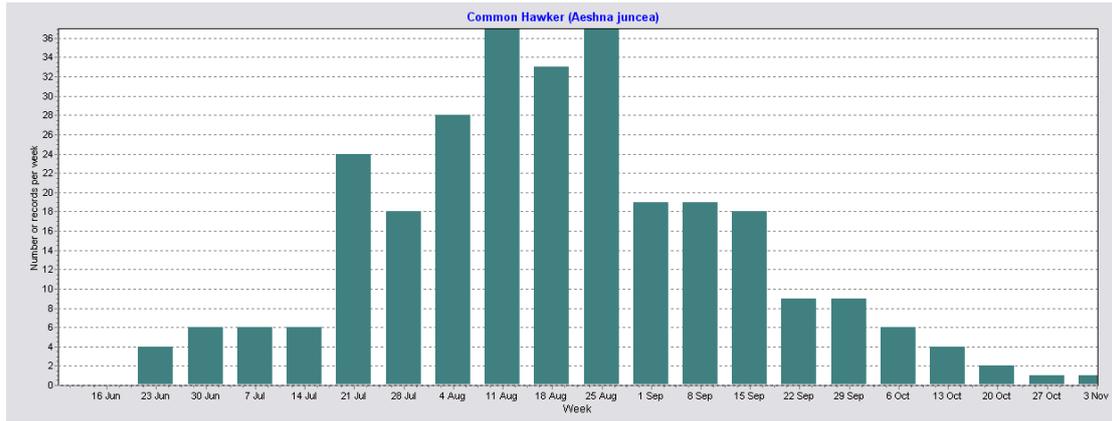
cross my mind at the time that they could have been Brown Hawkers coming in from Ireland.

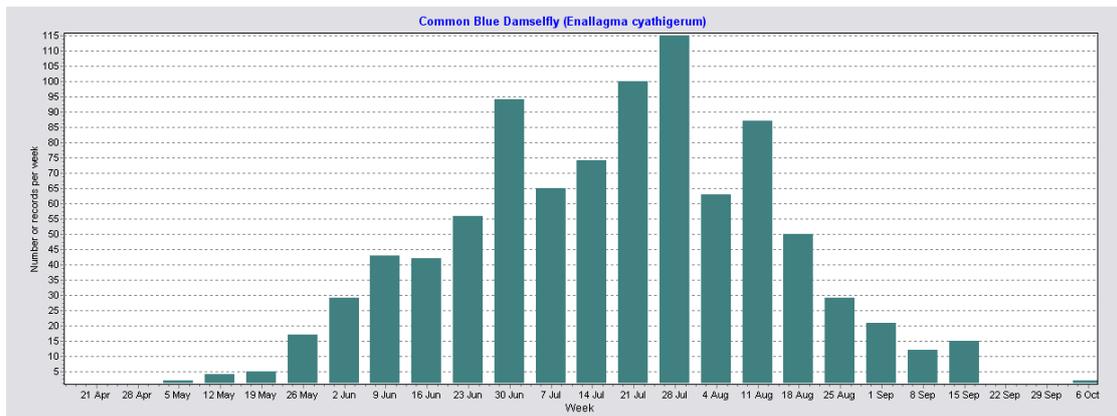
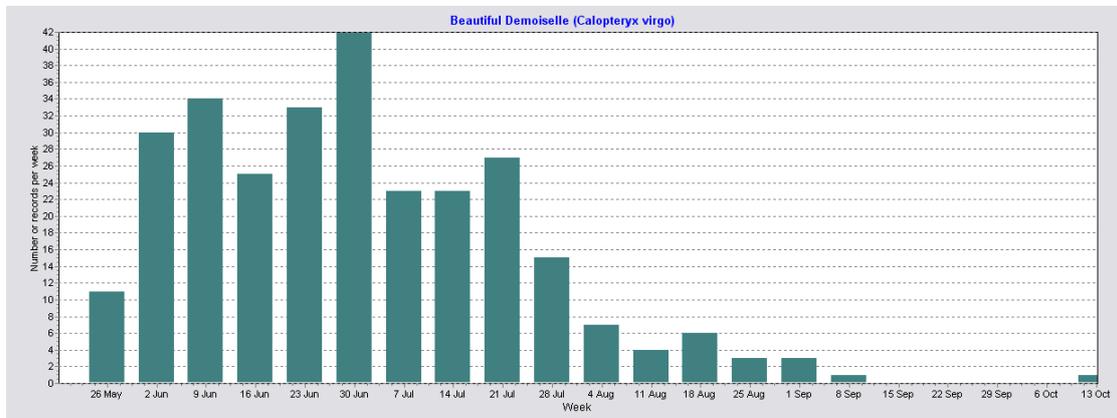
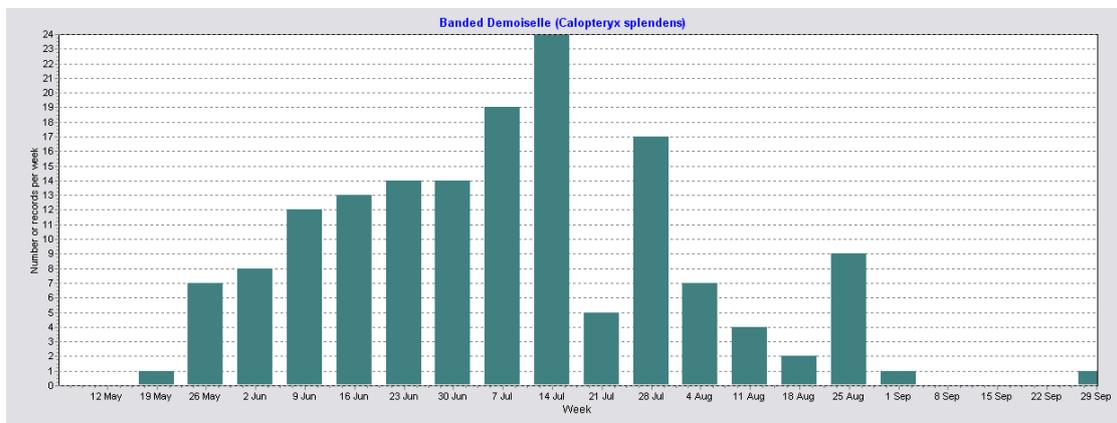
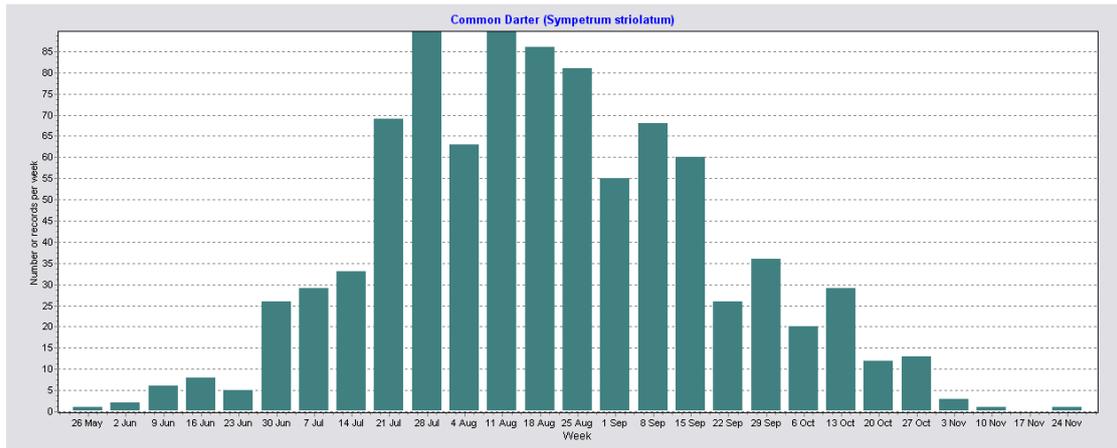
Prior to 2008 the only post-2000 record received for the west of North Wales was for a dead specimen found in the Camaes Bay area of Anglesey in July 2006. A photograph eventually showed it to be a female Common Hawker. Then for the 2008 flight season experienced observers sent in no less than 5 records for Brown Hawker from the west of North Wales (these are not yet in the system). Sally Davies was 80% sure of one flying at Breakwater Country Park, Anglesey on 19th July. Rob Strachan was very sure of one flying at Ty'n y morfa pinewoods, Harlech on 15<sup>th</sup> September and thought he might have seen another at The Dolidris pond at Minffordd on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, though he concedes it may have been Common Hawker. Dan Brown was 99% certain of a sighting at Cors Bodeilio, Anglesey at the start of October. Finally, John Harold mentioned seeing a Brown Hawker at Colwyn Bay but no other information on this was forthcoming. So it would seem that the species may have been present in very low numbers across the western vice counties during the latter half of the 2008 flight season. It would be marvellous to get confirmation of the species in the west with a good close up photograph and if anybody has one, or obtains one in the forthcoming flight seasons, would they please send it in. One has to ask the question - are these few individuals locally bred or are they migrants from across the Irish Sea?

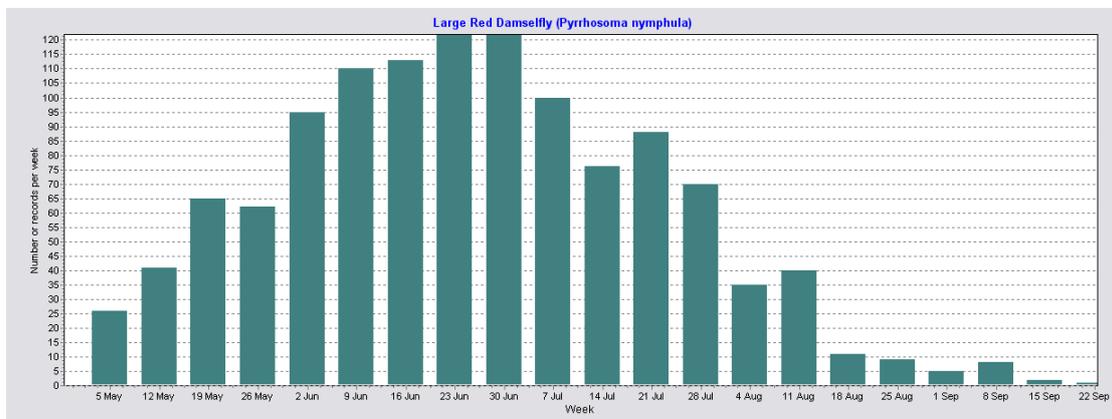
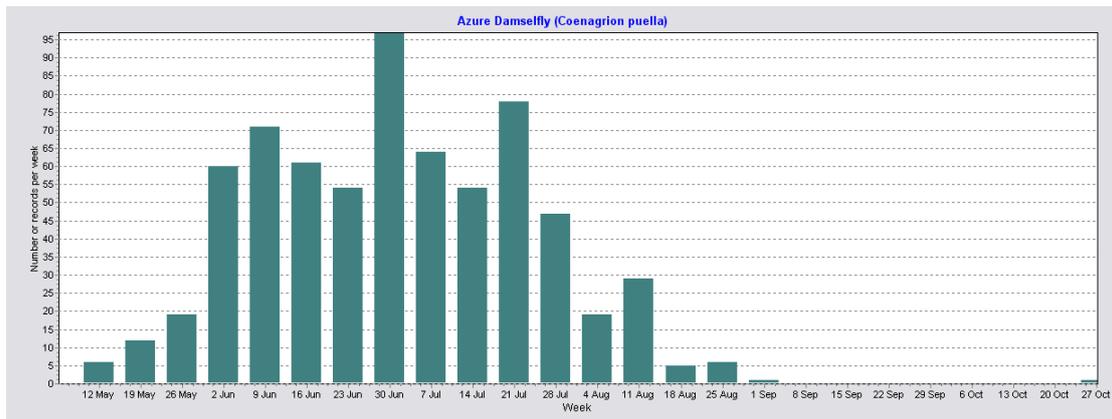
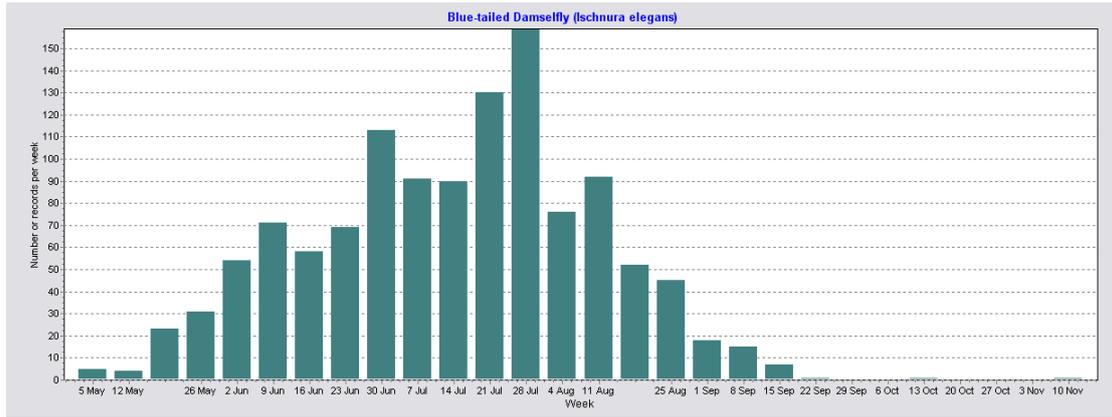
### Phenology histograms

I can now plot phenology histograms for the North Wales odonates using Recorder 6. Here are a few examples using adult records only. I'd like to separate out pre-2000 records from later ones too pick up possible shifts in flight periods due to Climate Change but haven't yet found a way to do it.









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