

North Wales Dragonfly Newsletter No 33. 17th June 2009

Hi all,



The flying season is now in full swing though I have received surprisingly few records to date. My own recording was put on hold while on a wildlife trip in Poland.

If anybody knows why the photos in these newsletters have started to come out spotted when sent out will they please let me know.

Invasion of Red-veined Darters (*Sympetrum foscolumbii*) in early June

This has to be the news of the month although I sadly missed it with being away in Poland. So far the species has been seen on Bardsey and at Llanfairfechan and the thought is that it came in with the amazing influx of Painted Ladies. For this link to a BBC article I have Bob Dennison to thank: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/1/hi/wales/8086926.stm>.

According to Richard Brown the discovery at Bardsey went as follows: Steve Stansfield saw an unidentified male darter fly in from the sea to the south end of the island on the 31st May. Richard Else then found the first Red-veined Darter, a female, on the 1st June at the lighthouse on the south end of the island and took notes from which they made the identification. The next day Richard Brown, by then knowing what to look out for, discovered nine individuals at a small pond in the lighthouse garden where he took some photos. Richard Else had another sighting on the 3rd and there was a final report of one on the 4th. The sightings are summarised in the Bardsey blog (<http://bbfo.blogspot.com/>).



Sympetrum fonscolombii male, Bardsey, 2nd June 09 (Richard Brown)



Sympetrum fonscolombii female, Bardsey, 2nd June 09 (Richard Brown)

The Llanfairfechan discovery was noted on the North Wales Birding Forum (<http://www.northwalesbirding.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2883&sid=ae4c4d904303fd85d8c1c9740177430>). On the 4th June at 1300 hours 'Peedee' from Penmaenmawr reported 6 - 7 males at the boating lake that were 'first seen 2 days ago by a friend but only reached conclusion of *Sympetrum* sp.'

So there must be a lot of these Red-veined Darters still lurking around in North Wales. Why not try and find some!

Small Bluetail or Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura pumilio*)

Yet another excellent June discovery was made by Andrew Graham. Last July I had been sent a photo of a possible Variable Bluet (*this especially for James Robertson!*) by Mandi and Bill Taylor that was taken at a small pond in Y Lordship forest, mid-Merionethshire. As this is miles from any previously known record I asked Andrew, who lives nearby, to check the pond out for the species. He failed to find it but as it was then late in the flight season for the species he promised to make a return visit this year. On the 2nd June he didn't find Variable Bluet but came across a completely new colony of Small Bluetails (see photos)! As this is a long way from any previous records it supports the idea that the species is much more common and widely distributed than current records would indicate. The species loves spring-fed, muddy, cattle-trodden ponds so please, please be on the lookout. The 2nd June this year was certainly a really special day!



Ischnura pumilio female immature *aurantiaca* phase, Y Lordship forest pond, 2 June 2009 (Andrew Graham)



Ischnura pumilio male, Y Lordship forest pond, 2 June 2009 (Andrew Graham)

I carried out my regular monitoring traverse of Cors Geirch for CCW on the Llyn yesterday and found Small Bluetail to be especially numerous compared to normal days. Conversely, I failed to find a single Small Red Damsel (*Ceriagrion tenellum*), typically the more numerous damsel on the site.

Variable Bluet or Damselfly (*Coenagrion pulchellum*)

On my way to Cors Geirch yesterday I called off at the series of three kettle hole lakes close to the shore, 2 kms west of Llanystumdwy. The eastern lake is poorly accessible due to *Phragmites* reed and the western lake appears somewhat putrid but the central lake [SH 452 375] appears in good shape. I was really surprised to find Variable Bluet to be dominant over the usually more common Azure Bluet and was serenaded (for want of a better word!) by a Cettis Warbler. The species was last recorded at these lakes by E S Brown during 1940 – 1941! This is the most westerly record from the Llyn for Variable Bluet in recent years though it is also known from Llyn Ystumlllyn and Pen Llyn.

Emperor's decline?

Is it just my perception or has there been a decline in the numbers of Blue Emperor (*Anax imperator*) this year? The species moved into North Wales about 10 years ago probably due to climate change and the previous hard frosty winter may have set it back. Certainly I have had no June emergences from my garden pond as usual.

Steve Cham's new damsel larvae and exuviae guide

This is excellent news as Steve's dragonfly larvae and exuviae guide is marvellous. The price is £7.50 and if you order it soon postage and packing are free (see attached flyer).

RSPB Inner Marsh Farm dragon and damsel day – Sunday 28th June

See attached flyer for this event.

Nothing stops the dragonfly enthusiasts!

During a torrential down pour on Wednesday, 27th May, the British Dragonfly Society successfully held the Welsh launch of their Dragonflies in Focus Project in Wales at Margam Country Park, Port Talbot. The five-year Dragonflies in Focus Project includes a nationwide survey to find out exactly where our dragonflies are, culminating in the production of a new national atlas. Despite the weather the enthusiasts who attended learned that over one third of the UK's resident dragonfly species are in decline. Steve Prentice, Dragonflies in Focus Officer said "Habitat destruction and the uncertainties of climate change pose considerable threats to dragonflies. In order to give them the best possible chance to survive, we must increase our knowledge of their habits and habitats." "Dragonflies are temperature-sensitive, making them useful for climate change impact studies. The information collected for the atlas will also be used to monitor endangered species and to help them recover." Interested nature-lovers can get involved and help by recording the activity of dragonflies in their neighbourhoods. There are five key pieces of information to make a good dragonfly record. These are the species observed, the site location, Ordnance Survey grid reference, the date and the recorder's name/contact details. Details of how to send in records are on the BDS website at www.dragonflysoc.org.uk.



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