

Hi all,



More species flying

I saw my first *Sympetrum striolatum* (Common Darter), all immature males, at the Abergele Business Park lake on the 25th June and collected 6 exuviae to show they were breeding there. Ian Sims witnessed three male *Orthetrum cancellatum* (Black-tailed Skimmer) at Valley Wetlands on 16 June. Rhys Jones saw *Cordulegaster boltonii* (Common Goldenring) along two rivers near Blaenau Ffestiniog on the 27th June, one along the Afon Cwmorthin at Tanygrisiau and one along the Afon Bowydd. I still haven't seen the species flying this year even though I've been in the right places. An exuvia of *Lestes sponsa* (Common Spreadwing) was found by Andy Harmer whilst pond dipping at Alyn Country Park on the 26th June (see below). This is always the last damselfly species to emerge but I have not seen any flying yet. I photographed the emergent *Aeshna juncea* (Moorland Hawker) below at a forestry pond above Maentwrog on the 28th June. It was one of three emerging on the same clump of Soft Rush when elsewhere there were none. This concentration of emerging adults seems quite common with the species. These are the first hawkers adults I've come across this year apart from *Anax* (Blue Emperor) and *Brachytron* (Hairy Hawker) which is unusual.



A male *Aeshna juncea* freshly emerged from a pond above Maentwrog, 28th June 2011. Photo A. Brandon

Orthetrum coerulescens (Keeled Skimmer) continue to emerge from the higher upland bog pools and I photographed this near Llyn Llenyrch above Maentwrog on the 28th June.



A freshly emerged male *Orthetrum coerulescens*, bog pool above Maentwrog, 28th June 2011. Photo A. Brandon

Two new Small Red Damsel localities found

I was out recording in the Ffestiniog - Maentwrog area on the 27th June and unexpectedly came across *Ceriagrion tenellum* at a fish pond near Gelilydan, 4 km east of Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, the nearest known locality with the species. I have Kelvin Jones to thank for the whereabouts of the pond. It is stocked with local Brown Trout, was constructed around 2006 and has small marginal areas of Sphagnum and Marsh St John's Wort. I found three males, two of which were newly emerged, and a female. There were previously only four known sites, two along the Lleyrn and two near Penrhyndeudraeth, the species being apparently extinct at former sites like Cors Goch in Anglesey. As this more easterly discovery increased the likelihood of other ponds in the area being home to Small Red Damsel I went out the following day and located a further site – a lovely perched acid bog lake in a rock basin above Maentwrog (see photo) - where I saw two immature males flying. The lake also has Sphagnum mats and Marsh St John's Wort, plants with which Small Red is commonly associated in acidic situations. It can also be found along slow flowing streams and at seepages with this plant association so please keep a look out, especially in Anglesey!



Bog lake with *Ceriagrion* above Maentwrog, 28th June 2011. Photo A. Brandon.



Male *Ceriagrion tenellum* at a Gililigan pond, 28th June 2011. Photo A. Brandon.
Note the reddish legs.



An immature female *Ceriagrion tenellum* at a Gililigan pond, 28th June 2011. Photo A. Brandon.



An immature female *Ceriatagrion tenellum* playing peekaboo, Gellilydan, 28th June 2011. Photo A. Brandon

Odonata larval identification course

Last Sunday, 26th June, on a lovely warm sunny day Andy Harmer presented a larval identification course at Alyn Country Park near Wrexham. According to organisers Nina Menichino and Roy Tapping it was the best attended course that Cofnod has staged which testifies to the huge popularity of Odonata. We had 25 keen enthusiasts listening diligently to Andy's every charismatic and humorous word and gained a huge amount of information which will provide a basis for us to go on, hopefully, to become experts in larval and exuviae identification.

Of all stages of Odonata, from the egg through to the adult flying stage, live larvae records are important at a water body as they indicate breeding, showing that the water quality and conditions are suitable for the species identified. Moreover, at one visit and at any time of year - not just in the adult flight season - one could build up an Odonata assemblage to categories a particular water body. Recording adult flying dragonflies has its merits but any adult could just be visiting a site to test out the breeding potentiality and then move on if conditions aren't just right for whatever reason. Recording copulation and oviposition is one step better, larval identification a further step in the right direction, but final instar exuviae and emergence are the tops. But then again, the enjoyment gained from just watching colourful adult dragonflies doing mind boggling aerobic behaviours as old as the Carboniferous Era can be enough reward in itself. If you do find any dragonfly or damselfly exuviae send them to me for confirmation of identification, and send me records of any odonate sighting no matter what life stage that might be. You must know by now that the four basics

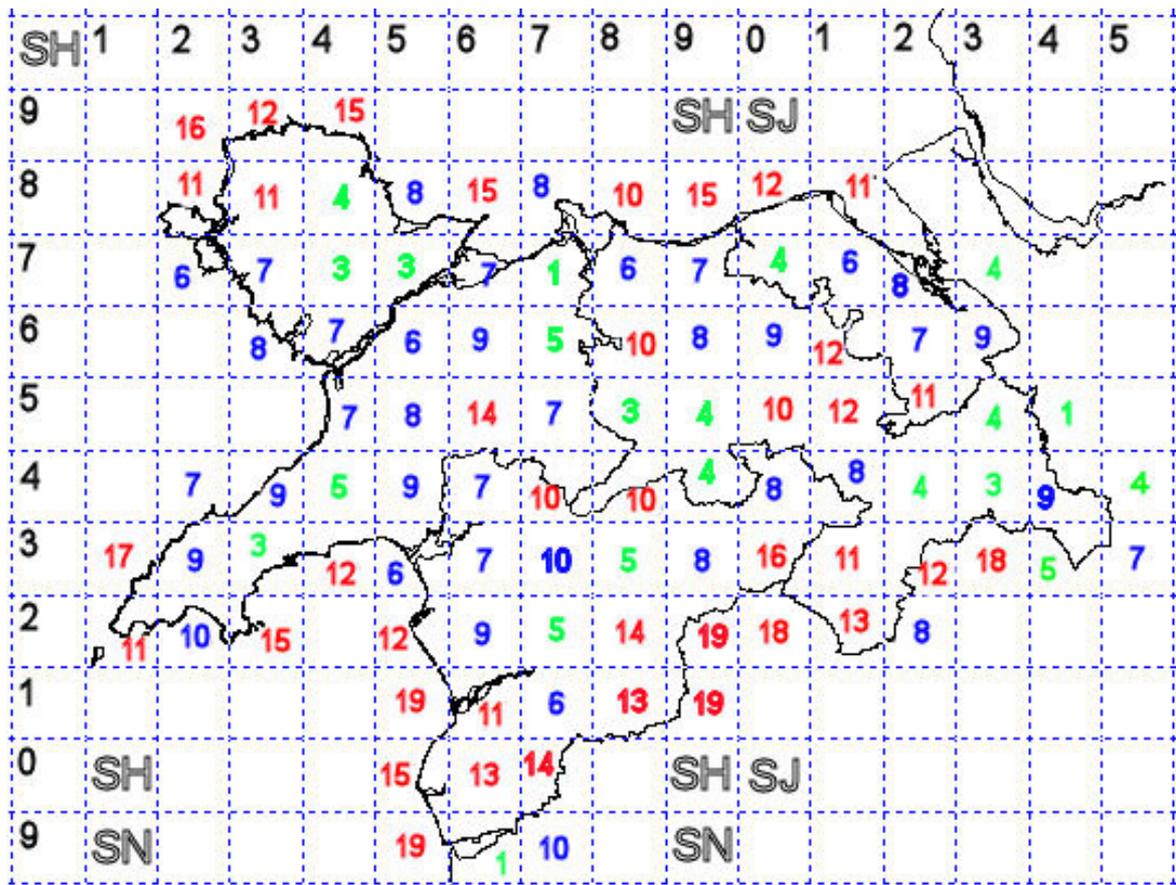
are species name, location name (water body if relevant), grid reference and date but numbers of each stage found would be a great deal better.

Other tree-lined lakes and ponds suitable for Downy Emerald?

I just can't believe that Llyn Tecwyn Isaf is the only site with *Cordulia aenea* in North Wales so for some years I've been checking out other deciduous tree-lined lakes around that area for suitable breeding sites. Some sections of the lake should contain overhanging trees or shrubs. The two that look most favourable are Llyn Mair and the higher Llyn Hafod-y-llyn (Reservoir) between Maentwrog and Rhyd. Unfortunately both these lakes, and particularly the latter, have a very impoverished odonate fauna and it appears from talking to a local man that the water for the reservoir emanates from old heavy metal workings which then goes on to feed Llyn Mair below. If someone has information on this I'd be please to hear about it. I'm not ruling out Pen Llyn to the south-west of Porthmadog but the dense vegetation there makes the lake margin very difficult to access.

Recording progress for the new British dragonfly atlas

The map below shows the current state of recording at the 10km square scale. Although we are slowly but steadily nibbling away, the coastal squares and those in south Merionethshire and Denbighshire are still under-recorded as well as a number of squares elsewhere. These are the squares that contain red numbers. Please, if you live near or pass through these areas call off at a water body and do some recording. Those species still missing from these squares are shown in the attached chart by abbreviations. But, as usual, records from anywhere are very welcome as part of the continual recording programme. Send me a photograph if you are not sure of the species.



There are quite a few 10km squares without any demoiselle records whatsoever and I would encourage people to send in any of sightings of these two species that are found along our streams and rivers.

Conwy RSPB Bioblitz day, 8 – 10th July 2011

This is yet another action-packed Cofnod-organised event with loads of animal and plant groups being demonstrated. I'll be out and about hopefully showing people the sun-loving dragons and damsels of Conwy RSPB on Sunday 10th July.

Allan

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