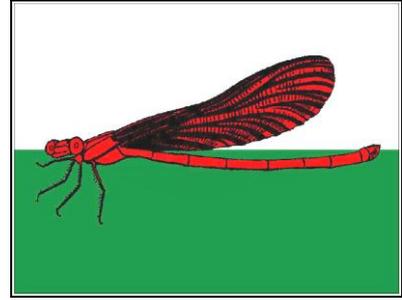


## NORTH WALES DRAGONFLY NEWSLETTER No. 63

21st June 2012



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



Hi all,

The next few weeks are the best time to observe odonates flying. The early species are still on the wing and the later species are starting to emerge so please go out there and do some recording to beat the deadline for the new atlas! We are particularly short on Beautiful and Banded Demoiselle records from many streams and rivers as well as Common Emerald Damselfly (or Spreadwing) and hawkers from many areas.

### New record for 10 km squares

Although all records are welcome this is to highlight new records for 10 km squares that have been sent in.

On the 28th May David Hill of Rhyl observed a damselfly emerging from his garden pond and sent a photo of it to me. It turned out to be a female *Coenagrion puella* (Azure Bluet) which is a new record for SJ08.

Sue Loose took a photo of a demoiselle at Y Ddol Nature Reserve on the 6<sup>th</sup> June which turned out to be a male *Calopteryx splendens* (Banded Demoiselle), a new record for the species for SJ17.

Brian Burnett sent me photos which produced two new records for *Calopteryx virgo* (Beautiful Demoiselle). One was a female which landed on his conservatory on the 13<sup>th</sup> June near an upland tributary of Afon Morwynion in the Llandegla area, a new record for SJ25. The other photo showed the wings of a dead male he found the day before in woodland on the north side of the Afon Llugwy valley, just east of Capel Curig, a new record for SH75. Coincidentally I met David Ackers while inspecting the Gwydyr reservoirs (see below) who reported photographing Beautiful Demoiselle around Swallow Falls, a short distance down the Llugwy from Brian's find.

### Ian's curious Gwydyr bluet

On a recent visit to the Betws y Coed area from Radnorshire Ian Standen visited some old mining reservoirs in the Gwydyr Forest to observe dragonflies. On the 4th June 2012 he caught a fascinating bluet at the twin reservoirs on Mynydd Bwlchyrhaearn [SH774600] which is causing us at the British Dragonfly Society to scratch our heads.



What the heck is this? Captured in the Gwydyr Forest on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Photos Ian Standen.

The individual appears chimera-like and one could be forgiven for thinking that it was a Photoshop mosaic made up of different parts of several bluet species. The consensus so far is that it is an aberrant male Variable Bluet (*Coenagrion pulchellum*), mainly based on the obviously disrupted or constricted antehumeral stripes of the thorax. But the black

mark on the second abdominal segment is quite unlike any bluet species. I personally have my doubts about it being Variable Bluet and believe it to be a mutant Common Bluet (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) or possibly, if such could exist given the safeguards that odonates have evolved in the shape of the pronotum etc. to prevent such a thing, a hybrid between that species and the Azure Bluet (*Coenagrion puella*). I base this on the shape of the hind margin of the pronotum, the lack of two distinct, short black lines along the suture on the side of the thorax, and the width of the proximal halves of the antehumeral stripes, all of which are *cyathigerum*-like. In support is the habitat of the reservoirs which are distinctly acidic with sphagnum bog, an environment not frequented by the Variable Bluet. Moreover, the nearest locations where the Variable Damsel is known to breed lie at least 20 km distant in the base-rich fens of Anglesey and the non-acidic lakes of the eastern Llyn. The species crops up again in the non-acidic ponds just inside the Cheshire border. There is indeed one old record of Variable Bluet from the Gwydyr area that has not been confirmed. This was by R P Bray in 1974 at Llynnau Bodgynydd [SH7659] (see newsletter No. 44 for the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010). The commonest bluets at the twin reservoirs are Common Bluet and the only other bluet recorded, the Azure Bluet, is uncommon. It has been suggested that heavy mineral contamination from mine water could have caused a mutation but the twin reservoirs are built on the watershed above the local mine and lead ore-rich spoil. The reservoirs are well-vegetated and look healthy.



The most western of the twin reservoirs, Gwydyr Forest. Photo A. Brandon

I checked out the ponds on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June and found about 20 normally marked mature Common Bluets and a few emergents but only one Azure Bluet. Whether it is significant or not, one of the female Common Bluets had constricted antehumeral stripes which I don't recall coming across before. It flew up to a tree but I managed to get a photo at maximum zoom.



Female *Enallagma cyathigerum* with constricted antehumeral stripes. Gwydyr Forest. 18<sup>th</sup> June. Photo A. Brandon

#### **Another new site in Anglesey for Scarce Bluetail**

I was in NE Anglesey on the 20<sup>th</sup> June and serendipitously observed from the roadside a colony of *Ischnura pumilio* (Scarce Bluetail) on private land in the Penmon area. The crowfoot ponds are surrounded by rush in coastal sheep meadow with gorse. Other species observed were *Coenagrion puella* (Azure Bluet) and *Ischnura elegans* (Common Bluetail). This is a new site for 10 km square SH67.



Male *Ischnura pumilio* at the Penmon coastal ponds. 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Photo A. Brandon

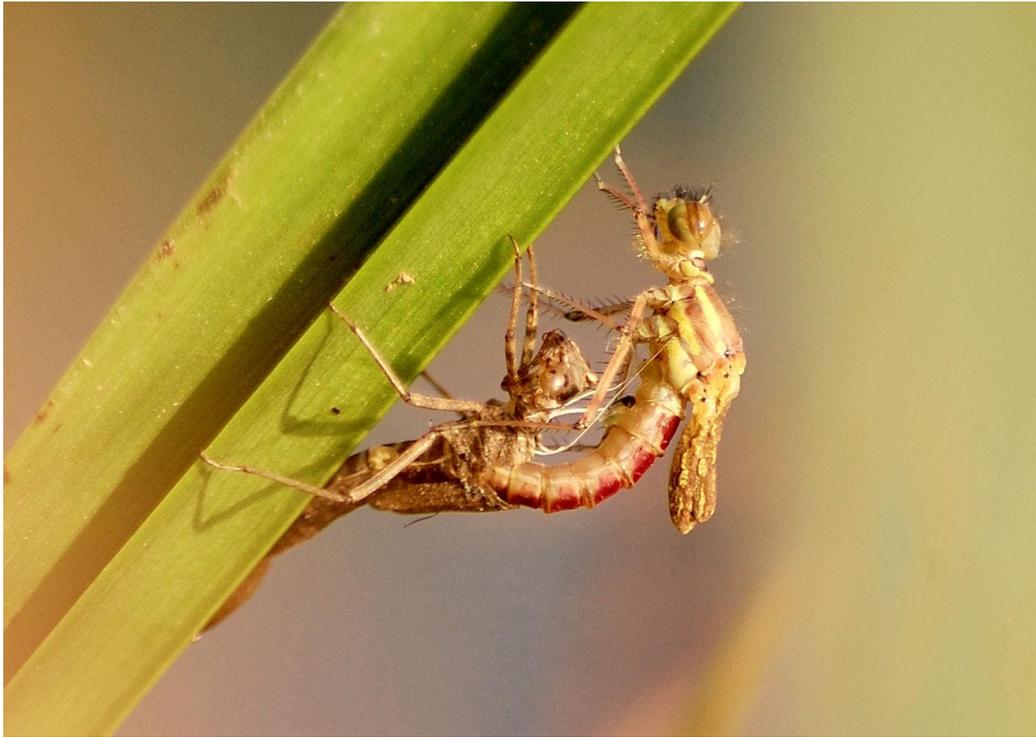
#### **Forthcoming dragonfly events**

*Snowdonian dragons and damsels.* Field trip to the Gwydyr Forest, Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. Joint meeting of the Clwyd Birders, Mold NWWT Group and British Dragonfly Society. Meet at the Mine car park [SH 773 589] at 10.15 am. Leader Allan Brandon.

*Rhuddlan Nature Reserve dragonfly walk.* Date to be confirmed but possibly on the afternoon of Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Leader Allan Brandon.

*Bodelwyddan Castle Bioblitz dragonfly walk.* Morning of Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Leader Allan Brandon.

#### **A few recent photos**



Emergent *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*, Ty Mawr Nature Reserve. 12 May 2012. Photo Sue Loose.



Freshly emerged female *Aeshna cyanea* at Rowen garden pond, 17 June 2012. Photo A. Brandon.



Male *Libellula quadrimaculata*, Gwydyr Forest. 17 June 12. Photo A. Brandon.



Immature male *Orthetrum coerulescens*, Gwydyr Forest. 17 June 2012. Photo A. Brandon



A peekaboo bluet seen on the back of a Llandudno bus. Photo A. Brandon

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