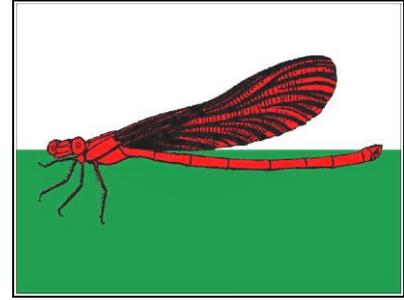


Y Fursen

NORTH WALES DRAGONFLY NEWSLETTER No. 67



12th September 2012

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



Hi all,

The flight season is now in decline with fewer and fewer species to be seen on the wing. The next week or so will be the last chance to find *Lestes sponsa* (Common Spreadwing), still missing from quite a few hectads across North Wales. *Aeshna mixta* (Migrant Hawker) is a species missing from many hectads but this will be flying well into October along with *Aeshna juncea* (Common or Moorland Hawker) and *Sympetrum striolatum* (Common Darter).

New records sent in for 10 km squares (hectads)

Allan Dawes came over the border from Shropshire on the 8th August and got *Lestes sponsa*, *Aeshna juncea* and *Sympetrum danae* for the first time in hectad SJ23 at the Pen y Gwely moorland reservoir [SJ218342], south of Glyn Ceriog.

Shirley Roulston sent a photo to identify of an aeshnid taken on the 15th August from the Edern area, Lleyn, which turned out to be a new record of *Aeshna cyanea* (Southern or Blue Hawker) for SH23 (see photo below).

Sue Loose sent in records which included *Aeshna cyanea* seen at a pond at Pen Isar Glyn Hall, Bronygarth, close to the Shropshire border on the 18th August, which is a new sighting for SJ23.

Barrie Potter photographed two *Aeshna mixta* (Migrant Hawker) that visited his garden near Rhewl on the 20th August (see photo below). This makes a new record for SJ14.

Jim Clark sent me a fine set of records for Anglesey, spanning several years. It included new hectad observations of *Aeshna mixta* for SH38 (2007 and 2008) and SH49 (2007), *Brachytron pratense* for SH38 and SH46 (May and June 2010), and *Libellula depressa* for SH38.

Simon Hugheston-Roberts visited the Carmel Head area of Anglesey on the 2nd September and saw a total of 5 migrant hawkers between the headland and Cemlyn which are new for SH39.

Anne and Stephen Coker spent two weeks of August recording in Montgomeryshire, including some hectads shared with the North Wales region, and managed to see new species for several hectads which are reflected in the missing species map below.

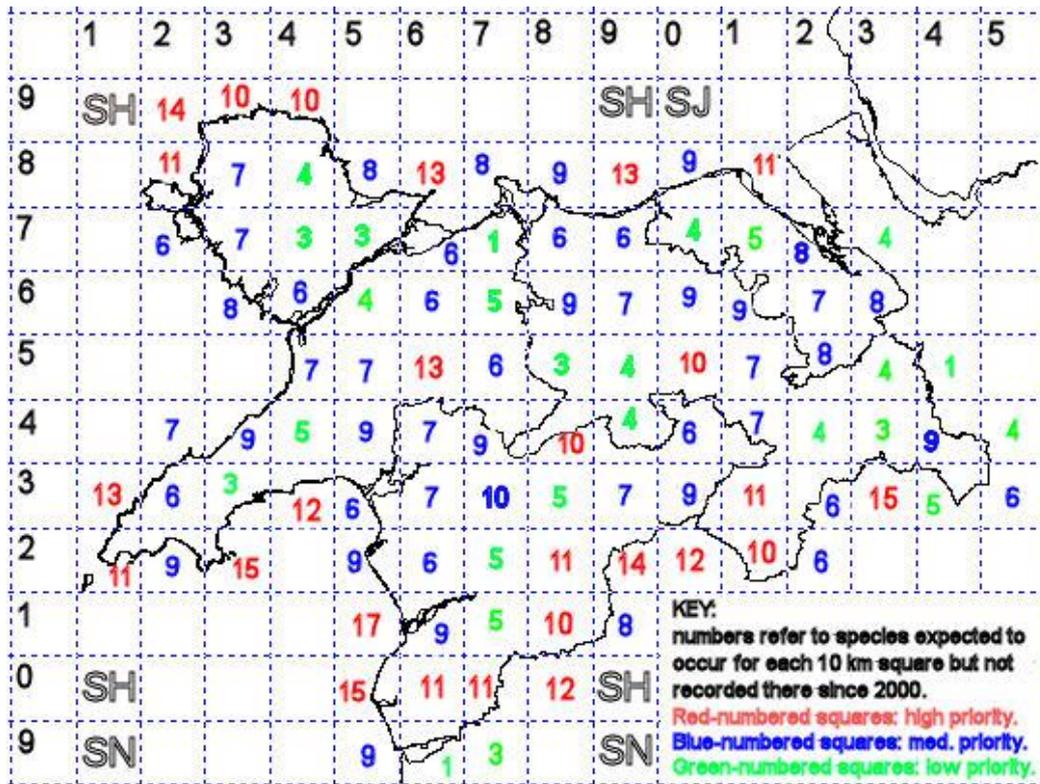


Male *Aeshna cyanea* near Edern, 15th August 2012. Photo Shirley Roulston.



A male *Aeshna mixta* photographed by Barrie Potter on the 20th August near Rhewl.
Notice the short antehumeral stripes of the male, the brown costal veins and the conspicuous pale 'tack' mark at the base of the abdomen which all readily separate the species from the larger *A. juncea* pictured below.

Current progress in hectad recording for the 2013 British and Irish Atlas



There is little time left now to find those missing species from the most poorly recorded hectads (shown with red numbers on the above map) and turn the map entirely blue or green. The best chance of success would be to look for Migrant Hawker or Common Spreadwing as they have still not been observed in many squares.

Yet another new Small Red Damsel locality in Merionethshire

I paid a visit to the isolated Moelfre bog lake [SH609257] in the Harlech area on a windy 20th August and came across a few *Ceriagrion tenellum* (Small Red Damsel). This is a new site for the species and, as with many ponds and lakes with Small Red, it has sphagnum mats and Marsh St John's Wort.



Moelfre bog lake above Harlech. Photo A. Brandon.



Male *Ceriagrion tenellum*, Moelfre bog lake, 20 August 2012. Photo A. Brandon

The lake is at 148 m above OD and has Black Darter, Common Spreadwing, Moorland Hawker, Common Bluet and Common Bluetail and I found a solitary Azure Bluet of the 'typical green form'. This form is mainly black as seen from above, unlike the more unusual 'blue form' of the female. However, this individual happened to have blue rather than green non-black areas.



Female *Coenagrion puella*, Moelfre lake, 20th August 2012. Photo A. Brandon.

Possible cause of unusual frequency of melanistic bluets across the British Isles this year

An increased number of bluets of the species *Enallagma cyathigerum*, *Coenagrion puella* and *Coenagrion hastulatum* (Scotland only) are showing up across the British Isles with unusual black markings. More usually they are generally confined to Scotland and the west of Ireland. Adrian Parr remarked by e-mail on the 12 August that 'All these variants are indeed very interesting; I wonder if the weather might be having some influence. In the spotted "succinea" form of the Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*, it is known that the length of the pupal period can influence the number and size of the dark spots. Thus a prolongation of pupal development due to low temperatures has been found to result in more and larger, sometimes even fused, spots. Maybe our damselflies are showing a similar phenomenon, with delayed emergence this year producing an increase in dark pigmentation, as in narrowed thoracic stripes and unusual abdominal S2 and S8/9 markings? If this were true, then perhaps the variants might be most common in areas where the weather has been worst this year.'

Some seasonal dragonflies



A female *Cordulegaster boltonii* caught ovipositing at Gwern Engen bog lake, Sychnant, by Sue Loose on the 13th August 2012. Note the long, functioning spiky ovipositor which she rams repeatedly into the substrate. It is unusual to find this species doing this in standing water rather than streams and rivers.



Male *Orthetrum cancellatum*, Talacre. August? 2012. Photo Sue Loose.



Female *Aeshna juncea* emerging at Gwern Engen bog lake, 12th August 2012. Photo A. Brandon. Unlike the male (see photo below) the female has short antehumeral stripes.



Male *Libellula quadrimaculata*, Gwern Engen, 13th Aug 2012. Photo Sue Loose.



Male *Sympetrum striolatum* caught in flight at Rhuddlan NR,
1st September 2012 by local enthusiast Eiffion Griffiths.



Male *Aeshna juncea*, Rhuddlan NR, 14th August 2012. Photo Eiffion Griffiths. Note the

yellow costae (or leading edge wing veins) which are brown in *A. mixta* below, and also the continuous yellow antehumeral stripes at the front of the thorax (poorly seen), which are very short in *A. mixta*.



Male *Aeshna mixta* caught in flight at Rhuddlan NR, 7th September 2012 by Eifffion Griffiths. The yellow tack mark at the base of the abdomen is conspicuous.

Feel like celebrating a good day's recording?

Hal White writes: 'Not so long ago I was surprised to find a dragonfly image printed on the cork of a wine bottle at a party. For anyone wanting a novelty, here is the info I got from my colleague who purchased the bottle locally.' "The wine that comes with the dragonfly cork is: 2011 Chateau Vignol Entre Deux Mers, a pleasant White Bordeaux of relatively reasonable price. There are no insects on the label, just on the cork and the capsule."

Allan

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