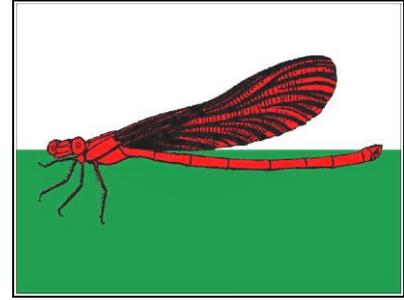


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NORTH WALES DRAGONFLY NEWSLETTER No. 76



8th July 2014

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



Hi all,

The dragonfly flight season has now reached its peak and all but the very earliest species will be on the wing this week. This, combined with the excellent weather, should provide opportunity for some brilliant observations. There have been no reports of sightings of immigrant dragonflies from North Wales so far.

New dragonfly atlas

The new British and Irish dragonfly atlas came out during May and I trust you now own your own copy. It is the culmination of a colossal amount of work by numerous individuals and I hope you agree that it is splendid publication.

Early Black Darter?

Radnorshire enthusiast Dick Eastward stops off at Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, one of the best sites for observing dragonflies in North Wales, on his many trips to visit his centegenarian mother near Porthmadog. On the 6th June he reported large numbers of Large Red Damselfly, Common and Azure bluets and Common Bluetail Damselfly – many in tandem and egg laying. He also saw some Four-spotted Chasers, three Hairy Dragonfly, two Downy Emerald and over 30 Keeled Skimmers. One dark individual caught his eye as he thought it might be a Black Darter, a species that would be emerging around now, so it would have to be a remarkably early sighting. He managed to shoot off a photo sent it to me. On close inspection it proved to be an unusually dark immature form of Keeled Skimmer. The pattern of black marks is wrong for Black Darter and it has very narrow antehumeral stripes, pale lines on the legs and a longer abdomen than Black Darter, which is waisted in that species. I've never seen such a dark form myself but something approaching it is illustrated by Lewington in Steve Brooks UK book and KDs European book.



Video of ovipositing Common Goldenring

Maria Jones of Tregarth observed an ovipositing female Common Goldenring along a stream near Tregarth, Bethesda on the 29th June and managed to take a lovely video (see attachment). Females of many species of Odonata lay eggs with the male still attached to the female after copulation in what is called 'in tandem' (darter dragonflies, some hawkers dragonflies and most damselflies) or with the male closely guarding the female (Skimmers and Chasers). This is the males way of ensuring that the female doesn't mate with a rival. But with most 'flyer' dragonflies, such as hawkers, emeralds and goldenrings, the females oviposit alone. In the case of this Goldenring, the female has a long-spiked ovipositor that she repeatedly rams into the sandy or gravelly stream bed, a process that can lead to damage to the ovipositor.

Allan

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