

North Wales Dragonfly Newsletter No. 49: 23rd January 2011.

Hi all,



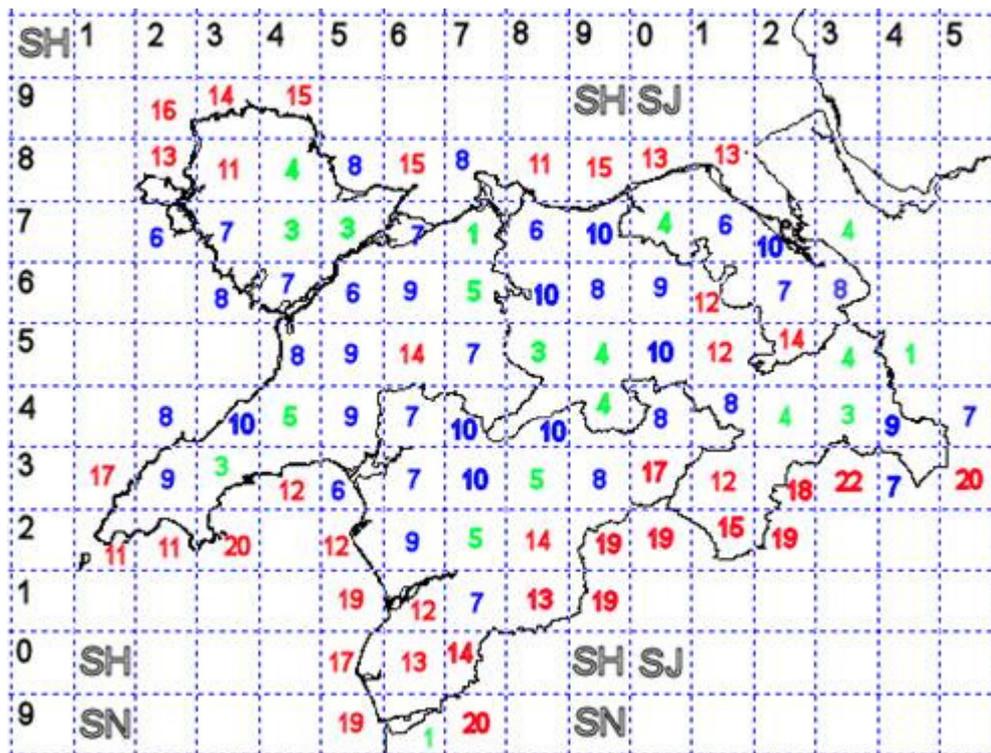
Well, unless you happen to be one of that special breed who are actively pond dipping for nymphs, a very useful and rewarding occupation it is no doubt and it would be good to have many more such experienced enthusiasts, this time of year is a bit on the quiet side as regards dragonflies. But let us at least spare a thought for the egg or larval stages of the odonates in their chilly aqueous environments. Most of us are longing for the beginning of May when things start to develop apace. When that time comes please be on a special look out for the early emerging *Brachytron pratense* (Hairy Dragonfly) from May into June in areas where it is not well known. For instance, it has been formerly seen by Chris Leighton at Deeside Nature Reserve, Connahs Quay, and it would be lovely to get an update from there.

This year it would also be rewarding to get photos, or some other form of positive identification, of one of those elusive Brown Hawkers that occasionally pop up in areas lying west of the Clwydian Range. I have rare, unconfirmed reports by experienced observers from as far afield as Colwyn Bay, Anglesey, the Llyn Peninsular and the Harlech area.

I normally respond as soon as I can to people offering records etc. so if you send, or have sent, a communication and I haven't responded within a few weeks please prompt me again. There is a possibility that your records/message/photo arrived as one of the many SPAM items and got automatically deleted.

Atlas recording

With the new British dragonfly atlas planned for 2013 there are only two more flight seasons left to focus recording on those 10 km squares across North Wales where there are still too many species unrecorded, or not recorded there since before 2000. The map below shows those squares, with red numbers, containing the most missing species. It is clear that some of the remoter, mainly mountainous areas, particularly in south Merionethshire and south Denbighshire bordering on Montgomeryshire and Shropshire, remain relatively under-recorded as are a few squares in south Flintshire and neighbouring Denbighshire to the west. Some of the partially terrestrial 10 km squares along the north Welsh coast and in the south-west may appear under-recorded but the high figures shown in such small areas probably reflect the lack of suitably diverse species habitat rather than a lack of effort made in recording. I would plead with recorders and potential recorders to focus on those 10 km squares with red numbers and also some with high blue numbers, especially if you happen to live near them.



Great sightings can also be made anywhere however. There are some squares in Snowdonia, for example, where a number of common species have still not been recorded. The Common Darter, for instance, remains unrecorded from squares SH55, SH66, SH70, SH73, SH81 and SH84. And just look at square SH65 that includes Snowdon itself - there must be species still waiting to be found there, especially along the Glaslyn valley. Sabine Nouvet sent in Beautiful Demoiselle records from there for last June which were entirely new for the square.

The map is derived from a more detailed chart that I prepared that shows which species are potentially missing for each 10 km square across North Wales. An updated version of the chart is attached.

A rock climber in Cwm Idwal



This photo of an emergent male *Cordulegaster boltonii* (Common Goldenring) was taken at the footbridge over the stream outlet to Llyn Idwal by Malcolm (Mills) Davies on the 25th June 2010. It just brings home what a particularly dangerous episode in a dragonfly's life this is. The maturing adult clings to its vacated exuvia, which itself has an apparently precarious hold on a rock or some form of vegetation. The dragonfly at this stage is also immobile and soft and easy prey to birds.

Variable Damsel update

On the 13th June 2010 Anne and Stephen Cocker recorded *Coenagrion pulchellum* (Variable Damsel) from Llyn Rhos-ddu in the Newborough Forest area of Anglesey where it hadn't been seen since Les Colley went there in 1980.

Dragonflies and Climate Change

It has been brought to my attention that Pensoft's recently published book in the Biorisk series, *Monitoring Climate Change with Dragonflies* edited by J Ott, can be downloaded as a PDF at <http://www.pensoft.net/product.php?p=10460&r=34&r2=>

Pensofts write: *'Monitoring Climate Change with Dragonflies provides an important new tool for dealing with arguably the most important environmental challenge facing modern humanity. It provides a solid foundation on which subsequent research can be built, and can help ensure that responses to climate change are as appropriate as possible. This book combines papers from two symposia of the World Wide Dragonfly Association (WDA) in Pontevedra (2005) and Swakopmund (2007) - which were compiled by the editor, as well as some additional contributions and a general view on biodiversity related climate change impacts from the EC funded ALARM project.*

All the contributions show that there are already and will be even more changes within dragonfly as well as general aquatic communities, leading to threats for many species, in particular the stenoeious ones. We are far from general conclusions and understanding of all factors and effects, as still too many questions are open: e.g. i) whether adaptations of species to new conditions are possible, and if yes, to which extent, ii) what are long term and synergistic effects, and iii) whether there are management options to mitigate climate change impacts. But already now it is clear, that there is an urgent need for action to reduce the effects of climatic changes (not only) for dragonfly habitats.'

Spanish cartoon

This cartoon by Forges, one the most famous cartoonist in Spain, was published in El Pais on the 16 January. The text reads: *Spanish researchers at the University of Vigo discover the ability of dragonflies to reproduce without males.*

Madrid.-Investigadores españoles de la Universidad de Vigo han descubierto la capacidad de las libélulas de reproducirse sin necesidad de machos.



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