

North Wales Dragonfly Newsletter No 41: 23rd March 2010

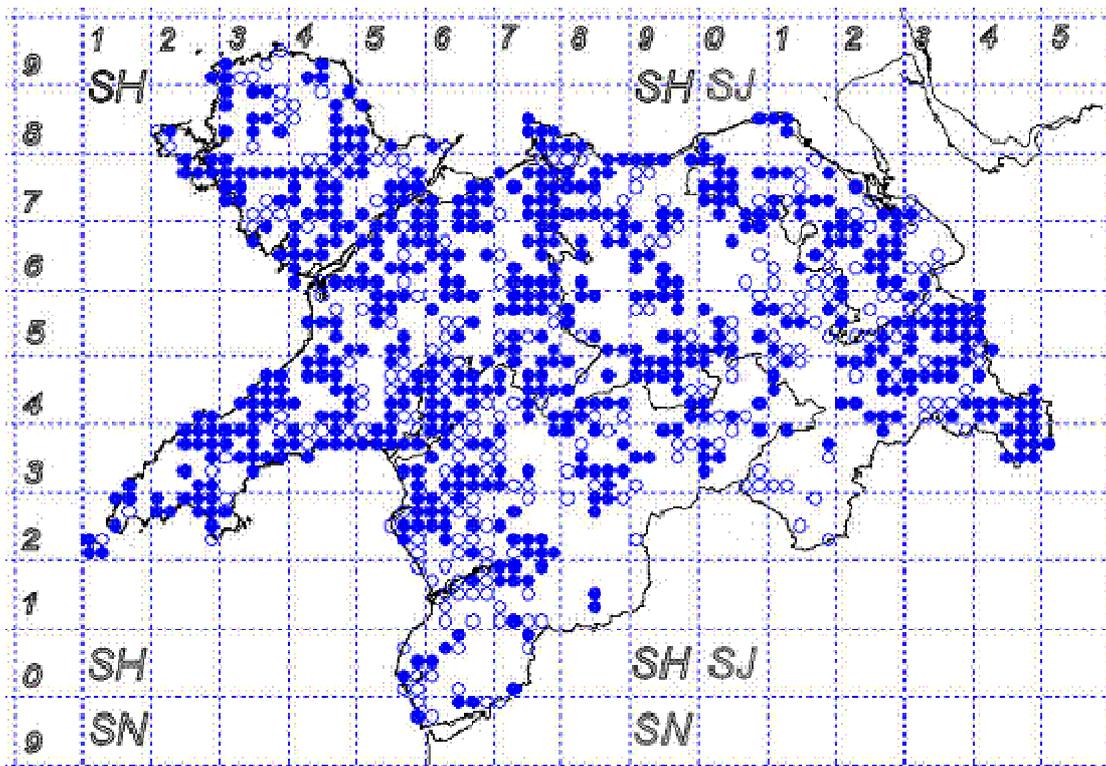
Hi all,



In a few weeks a Large Red Damselfly larva will crawl out of its two winter-long aqueous confinement at the bottom of one of our ponds or ditches and, along with its closely synchronised kin, herald the start of the 2010 dragonfly flight season. The emergence of other species of damsel and dragon will hopefully follow on in fairly quick order. The hard frosts of last winter, the second in succession, may have taken their toll of some of our dragonfly species though. For instance, will any Red-veined Darter larvae, that may have developed from eggs laid by the mass invasion last summer, have survived the cold and emerge this year?

The British Dragonfly Society dragonfly atlas and the next 3 years recording

The new dragonfly atlas is on course to be published in 2013. This leaves us with at the most 3 more flight seasons to fill in the gaps in the North Wales record coverage. The BDS has ruled that the atlas species distribution maps will only show occurrence and that at the 10km scale. So one priority for the next few seasons is a programme targeting those 10km squares where species have either not been recorded from the start of the cut-off year 2000 or not recorded at all. With this in mind I have produced a series of plots showing the distribution of records for each North Wales species at 10km resolution. I have attached this as a separate document to avoid formatting problems in this document. As with the All Species Map shown below, open blue circles denote records of any stage of insect development (i.e. adult, copulation, oviposition, larva, exuvia, emergence) up to the end of 1999. The filled in circles show these records for 2000 onwards.



The All Species Map with tetrad size circles shows clearly the 10km squares that are still poorly recorded. If you happen to live in or close to one of these areas it would be lovely if you could adopt one or two to focus your recording in. If anybody knows of enthusiasts or groups who might like to take this enjoyable, adventurous task on please pass the message on.

As regards the species distribution maps, several of our species would be expected to be more or less ubiquitous, such as the *Enallagma cyathigerum* (Common Bluet or Blue Damsel) or *Sympetrum striolatum* (Common Darter). The maps for all these have notable gaps waiting to be filled in, or squares with older records requiring updating. The same goes for those species which occupy only part of our area. In addition, for the last species, a search of suitable habitats in the 10km squares adjoining known occurrences might extend their range.

To highlight just some examples for specific species:

Platycnemis pennipes (Blue Featherlegs or White-legged Damsel) along the Dee. This species is known to occur along the Dee at Holt and in the Fenn's Moss area but has not been picked up along Dee between those areas in SJ44.

Lestes sponsa (Common Spreadwing or Emerald Damsel). A widespread species with several gaps in its range but there is a broad zone going up through Denbighshire and Flintshire where it has never been recorded.

Aeshna grandis (Brown Hawker). I have currently omitted several records from the west of our area from the distribution map that were sent to me during the 2008 flight season. I am still waiting for positive confirmation that the species occurs west of the Clwydian Range.

Dragonfly events in 2010

A joint BDS/NWWT Arfon Branch field meeting on Sunday, 13 June 2010 to Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, Merionethshire and Cors Geirch NNR, Llyn Peninsular.

Leader/ contact: Allan Brandon (01492 651066; Allan@rowenconwy.wanadoo.co.uk). Kate Gibbs (NWWT) (01248 681936; geoffkate.gibbs@care4free.net). The aim is to observe some of the rarer species in North Wales including Down Emerald, Hairy Hawker, Scarce Blue-tailed Damsel and Small Red Damsel, as well as other species including Beautiful Demoiselle, Golden-ringed Dragon and Keeled Skimmer. Rendezvous at 10 am at the roadside car park [SH630372] along the lovely Llyn Tecwyn Isaf, above Cilfor village, south of Penrhyndeudraeth; then on to Cors Geirch NNR, Rhyd-y-clafdy [SH328349], Llyn; finishing mid-afternoon. Bring a packed lunch and essential wellies; nets & close-focusing bins optional but no dogs. Shared transport from Conwy area on offer.

Survey of some of Snowdonia's least recorded areas.

Kate Williamson has suggested we do a survey with teams targeting three of the most poorly recorded south Snowdonia 10km squares. The date will probably be in July or August. A similar session was due to take place last August but I was unexpectedly hospitalised.

Did you know?

That both dragonfly and damselfly adults are fairly commonly subject to mite infestation. Here are some examples though I personally haven't seen any UK adults with anything like the scale of the problem seen on some odonates from warmer climates.



Ceriagrion glabrum female South Africa 2009



Ceriagrion tenellum male, Cors Geirch 2005



Philonomon luminans female, Mafia Island, off Tanzania 2006

Allan

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