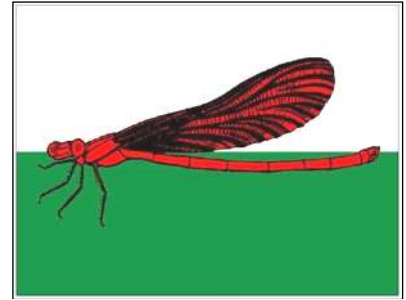




Y Fursen

**North Wales
Dragonfly
Newsletter
No. 106**



21st July 2026

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



Hi all,

Dragonfly and damselfly species are particular sensitive to temperature changes and they are now moving and extending their ranges like never before in response to developing Climate Change, as evidenced by the latest sightings in North Wales and adjoining English counties.

The Lesser Emperor is now common and breeding in the north-east

I stated in my last newsletter that the Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* has not been observed in North Wales this year. This prompted experienced south Cheshire recorder Stephen Barlow to kindly visit Hanmer Mere [SJ453391], 9 miles south-east of Wrexham, on the morning of the 11th July to help boost our numbers. [Note for pedants: as far as I understand it, Hanmer Mere is historically in a detached part of Flintshire that for biological recording comes into VC Cheshire, but it is now located in Wrexham County Borough and therefore part of Wales!]. The meres of Cheshire and Shropshire bordering VC Denbighshire have been the home of colonies of Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* for a number of years and he thought rightly that they should also be at Hanmer Mere. He saw several in flight there and managed to get some pictures adequate for positive verification.

Stephen reports that the meres of Cheshire and Shropshire now have good breeding populations of Lesser Emperor as evidenced by these photos he took recently at Marbury Big Mere, only a few miles from the Welsh border. Note that, unlike its cousin the Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*, the Lesser Emperor adults stay in tandem whilst the female oviposits.



Tandem oviposition of Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* at Marbury Big Mere, VC Cheshire on 13th July 2026. Photo copyright Stephen Barlow.



Tandem oviposition of Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* at Marbury Big Mere on 14th July with male Common Bluet *Enallagma cyathigerum*. Photo copyright Stephen Barlow.



Male Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* at Marbury Big Mere on the 26th June.
Photo copyright Stephen Barlow.

Another locality for Small Redeye

Sean Dunkin has just found several Small Redeye *Erythromma viridulum* flying at pools [SJ191770] at Holywell Heritage Park on the 16th July, this being only the fourth location known in North Wales. Considering that since August 2004 the species has now been seen from Burton Mere bordering Cheshire to RSPB Cors Ddygfa on Anglesey it surely must now be present at very many sites across North Wales.

Sean is a newcomer to recording dragonflies and damselflies so has done extremely well in photographing this species and the Green-eyed Hawker *Isoaeschna isosceles* at Gronant recently.



Male Small Redeye *Erythromma viridulum* at Holywell Heritage Park, 16th July.
Photo copyright Sean Dunkin.

Keep a look out for the Blue Chaser

The Blue (or Scarce) Chaser *Libellula fulva* is another species that we may be seeing in North Wales soon and it could already be here. The species is also actively expanding its range northward but still remains a rarity in adjoining parts of England. It was photographed on the 8th June this year at Severn Valley Country Park near Alveley in Shropshire by Jimmy Yau (see Shropshire dragonfly blog: <https://shropshiredragonflies.co.uk/blog/>).

It is a riverine species primarily inhabiting slow-flowing, unpolluted rivers and marshy, vegetated ditches. So please keep an eye out for it when visiting these habitats. Because of the males black-tipped abdomen there can be confusion with males of the Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*. The large black marks at the base of the hindwing readily distinguish it from that species however. I'd like to remind the readers that the latter species is also a relatively new arrival here, being first recorded in Shotton in 2000. It has since expanded its range right across North Wales!



Male Blue Chaser *Libellula fulva*, Cambridgeshire 2013. Photo copyright Allan Brandon. Note the black marks on the sides of the abdomen denote that this individual had mated. The legs of its mate have readily removed the waxy powder-blue pruinescence.

Red-veined Darter migration into North Wales

As far as I know, there is still no evidence that the Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii* is actually breeding successfully in North-Wales. But occasional observations representing probable migration waves continue to occur as they have done for many summers when conditions allow. Two records with indifferent supporting photos were submitted to iNaturalist. A male was seen at RSPB Conwy on the 11th June by “Molly H” and a female photographed on Bardsey on the 5th July by Cameron Wilkins.

The most recent sighting of a male was made by Alex Humphreys Jones on the 18th July at the edge of the Shotwick Boating Lake, close to the Cheshire border.



Male Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii* at Shotwick Boating Lake, 18th July. Photo copyright Alex Humphreys Jones.



The five vice counties of North Wales don't have the same number of odonate (dragonfly and damselfly) recorders that most English vice counties are fortunate to have, so it would be lovely to boost our official recordings. I'm sure that other observations of the above species and others were made across North Wales but will never progress to official recording systems. You may already put photos of odonates on Facebook pages or independent online blogs so that their occurrence and beauty can be shared with others. But to make your observational records lasting, more useful and much more widely shared I would strongly encourage you to also submit them online to one of the following biological recording websites. These have been set up to make it easier for wildlife sightings to be shared and collated, checked by experts and made available to support research and decision-making:

Cofnod – the North Wales biological record centre - <https://cofnod-ors.lerc.online> Cofnod and iRecord share their records;

iRecord – the national British biological record website - irecord.org.uk;

iNaturalist – the Worldwide biological recording website - <https://www.inaturalist.org>
Odonate records from this website are submitted to iRecord where I verify them for North Wales.

Please do not submit records to more than one of these sites though as this will lead to record duplication. At least a 6-figure grid reference and a relevant site name are required.

Allan

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