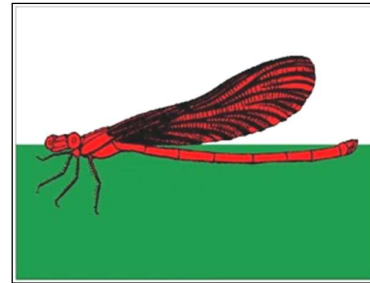


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**North Wales
Dragonfly
Newsletter
No. 108**

12th August 2026



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

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facility  on the Cofnod home page: <https://www.cofnod.org.uk>

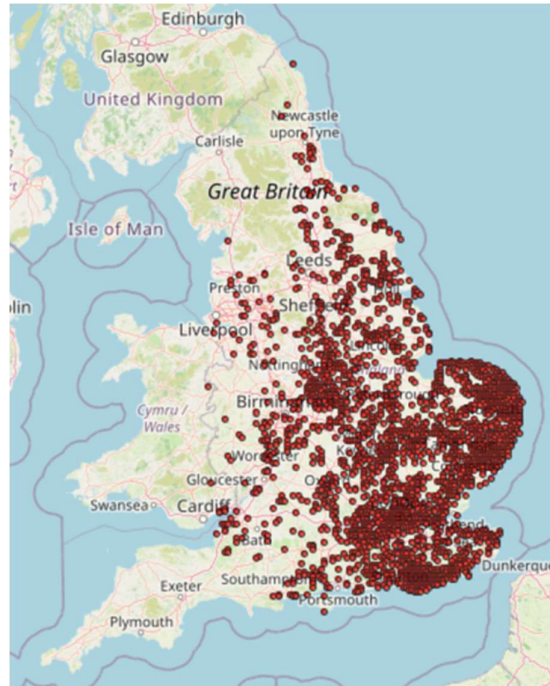


Hi all,

The drought conditions across North Wales have led to many ponded water bodies being extremely low or even drying out during the summer months. The apparent lower numbers of Odonata species observed may be related to this. Stephen Barlow, who used to do regular transect monitoring for Odonata on Fenns, Whixall and Bettisfield mosses bordering on Shropshire, has reported that several species, and in particular Black Darter, Moorland (or Common) Hawker and Common Spreadwing, have declined considerably in numbers in the past 2 years. Drought and natural succession of dug peat cuttings may be important contributory factors.

Another colonizer expected here this summer – the Western Willow Spreadwing

I have reported in the last few newsletters about several new species moving northwards and entering North Wales as a direct result of Climate Change. Another species, the Western Willow Emerald (or Willow Emerald Damselfly if you prefer) *Lestes* [*Chalcolestes*] *viridis*, is knocking on our door as it is now breeding at our eastern border with Cheshire. It has been rapidly spreading northwards across England since it first arrived and colonized east Sussex around 2007. The first Cheshire record was in 2022 and, for Shropshire, in 2025. Adults were observed close to our border at RSPB Burton Mere [SJ313735] on the 25th September 2025 by Graham Jones and he recorded a copulating pair a day later. At the end of December 2025, Jeff and Julie Rogers spotted its telltale oviposition scars in the same area (see below).



2025 record distribution of Western Willow Spreadwing across Britain taken from the NBN Atlas.



Male Western Willow Spreadwing, Lacs de Milas, Pyrenees Orientales, 2009. Image © Allan Brandon



Female Western Willow Spreadwing, R. Matassa, Felluns,
Pyreness Orientales, 2009. Image © Allan Brandon

These large, long-bodied damselflies (39 – 48 mm long) are found with outspread wings hanging from shrubs and trees bordering still or slow-flowing water. The adults fly until later in the season than other damselflies, and are commonly seen well into October. Copulating females lay eggs into a variety of twigs (not just willows) that overhang the water, leaving a series of distinctive oval scars. This allows us to detect the presence of the breeding adults after the flight season has ended (see photo).



Oviposition scars on *Salix*. (A) new growth of *Salix* four weeks after oviposition, showing distinctive openings and before any eggs would have hatched, (B) Openings from previous year's oviposition scars, showing the effect of stretching resulting from the continued growth of *Salix*. (Photos and descriptions taken from Steve Cham, *Journal of the British Dragonfly Society*, Volume 37, No.1, pp. 40-59).

As the species flies until October there is still plenty of time to find it here or look for the oviposition scars throughout the winter.

Blue-eyed Hawker dispersal migrants

A possible migrant that could be seen this summer, but might have already been seen, is the Blue-eyed Hawker (or Southern Migrant Hawker) *Aeshna affinis*. At least one adult was recorded on Hilbre Island [SJ183882] in the Dee Estuary by Chris Williams on the 25th and 26th August 2021.



Blue-eyed Hawker, Hilbre Island, 25th August 2021. Image © Chris Williams

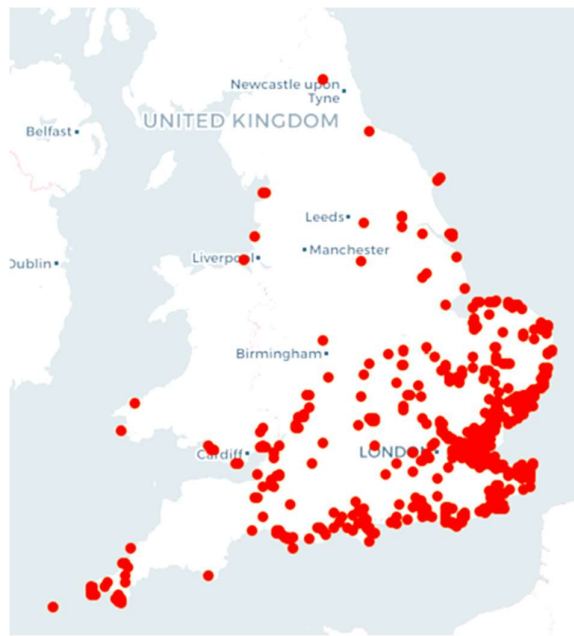
Following earlier small influxes to the south of England, the species finally colonised areas of the Thames Estuary in 2010. During 2018 to 2020 it was widely reported from mainly coastal areas of southern and eastern England where new breeding sites were considered likely. Sporadic records from South Wales - Kenfig NNR in 2019 and Pembrokeshire in 2021 – are probably, like the Hilbre Island occurrence, individual dispersive adults as no breeding activity has yet been noted.



Male Blue-eyed Hawker, Montalba, Pyrenees Orientales, August 2009.
Image © Allan Brandon



Male Blue-eyed Hawker, Montalba, Pyrenees Orientales, August 2009.
Image © Allan Brandon



2025 record distribution of Blue-eyed Hawker across Britain taken from the NBN Atlas.

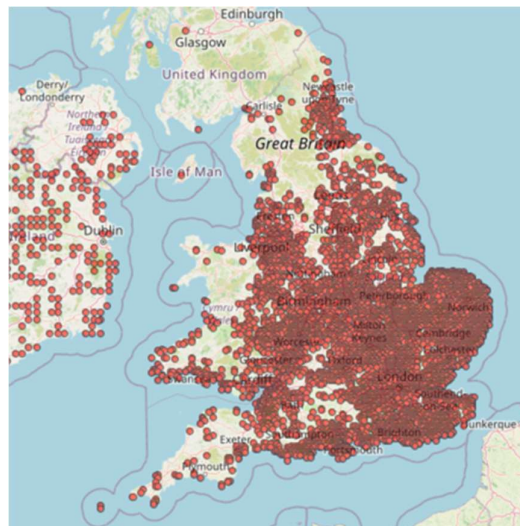
Ruddy Darter disperses west as in some previous summers

Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* is quite commonly seen as an adult in the extreme north-eastern part of North Wales and is likely to be breeding there as it is in Cheshire. Farther west, however, records probably represent occasional adult summer dispersal

waves. A single male was photographed by Matt Doves on the 30th July at RSPB Conwy [SH79997727].



Male Ruddy Darter, RSPB Conwy, 31st July 2026.
Image © Matt Doves.



2025 record distribution of the Ruddy Darter taken from the NBN Atlas

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