

Isle Pool Dragonflies & Damselflies

Sue Rees Evans: Shropshire County Dragonfly Recorder



Dragonfly and damselfly species were recorded in 2023 during 4 separate visits: 24th May, 7th June, 21st August & 4th September. All observations were made from the fishing platforms surrounding Isle Pool. It should be noted that terrible July weather prevented a visit during this time. Different species fly at different times of the year and the majority of species are on the wing in July so a future visit during this time would be useful as a number of common species were not recorded which I would expect to be present.

In summary there were 6 species of dragonfly and 5 species of damselfly:

Dragonflies: Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis*

Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*

Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*

Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*

Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*

Damselflies: Banded demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*

Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*

Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*

These species are summarized below and the exact species records are included at the end of this report. The photographs illustrate the species present but were not taken at Isle Pool.

Dragonflies

Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis*

Common & widespread in lowlands of UK and Common in Shropshire: Found in a wide range of well vegetated standing or slow flowing waters such as ponds, lakes, canals, ditches and slow flowing rivers. Lockton et al., (1996) described this species as common and this is still very much the case today with Brown Hawker regularly attracting a good number of widespread annual records.



Photo: D. Kitching

Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*

Common in south of UK and regular migrant; Common in Shropshire: Found in a wide range of habitats including still and slow flowing water. Lakes, ponds, canals and slow flowing rivers, but usually avoids acidic waters. First recorded in Shropshire in 1979. Despite a handful of sightings in the 1990's this species was still regarded locally as scarce (Lockton et al., 1996). The situation has now changed dramatically and following a national range expansion both north and westwards (Cham et al., 2014) Migrant Hawker is now common in Shropshire with a good distribution extending from the centre to the northwest of the county.



Photo: D. Smallshire

Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*

Common & widespread in southern UK and Common in Shropshire: Mostly found on well vegetated standing water habitats such as ponds, lakes, canals and large ditches, but also on slow flowing rivers. Known to be a pioneer species often seen at new ponds. Earliest Shropshire record made in 1979 at Radbrook, Shrewsbury. This was followed by a few rare sightings in the mid-late 1980's and even in the 1990's Lockton et al. (1996)



Photo: D. Kitching

described Emperor Dragonfly as 'scarce.' The situation has now changed in Shropshire and the database has well over 300 records, surpassing the 29 records at the time of the 1996 publication. Emperor Dragonfly is now regarded as 'common' in Shropshire and this was reflected in the national atlas (Cham et al., 2014) where analysis showed a significant increase in this species.

Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*

Common & widespread in UK and Common in Shropshire: Found in a wide range of mostly standing water habitats including lakes, ponds and canals and thrives in acidic heathland ponds. Known to be a pioneer species at new sites. Described by Lockton et al., (1996) as local, this species is now common in Shropshire. The National Atlas (Cham et al., 2014) highlighted a significant increase in distribution and this has been seen in Shropshire, particularly toward the north and west of the county. Though found in a wide range of Shropshire standing waters numbers are highest at acidic heathland pools.



Photo: D. Kitching

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*

Locally Common (increasing) in UK and Local in Shropshire: Found on ponds, lakes and slow flowing rivers that are open and with margins having bare soil and stones and little vegetation. Often a pioneer of new sites with bare banks and often recorded basking on banks. Previously described as uncommon there are now records spread across the county. Though currently classed as local in Shropshire this species may well be regarded as common and widespread in the near future.



Photo: D. Kitching

Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*

Locally Common (increasing) in UK and Local in Shropshire:

Frequents well vegetated shallow ponds, lakes, ditches and canals usually with woodland close by. Described as scarce by Lockton et al., (1996) this species is now local with the current distribution map showing an increase in distribution. This is largely in the central, northern and eastern areas of the county though a number of records have been made in the south west which is comparatively less well recorded. The National Atlas (Cham et al., 2014) showed a slight increase in distribution expanding northwards and recently some interesting records were made in Shropshire such as the first ever record at Cramer Gutter, Catherton Common.



Photo: P. Hunt

slight

Damselflies

Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*

Common & widespread in lowlands of UK and Common in Shropshire:

Generally confined to slow flowing rivers and streams with muddy bottoms but can also be found on canals and ponds or lakes close to rivers. Good emergent vegetation is important and this species can often be found perched on open banks and flying in nearby meadows. Lockton et al. (1996) described Banded Demoiselle as 'common' with a distribution concentrated mainly on the lowland rivers of Shropshire, and noting many recorded sightings of adults on lowland neighbouring still water sites. The situation is largely the same to this day with this common species being recorded frequently in large numbers. The only noticeable changes in distribution are an infilling throughout the county with more records of this species in a greater number of waterbodies, and a noticeable increase in records in the north of the county.



Photo: D. Swaby

Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*

Common and widespread in UK (except Scotland) and Common in Shropshire: Found across a wide range of still water habitats but generally prefers smaller ponds and ditches with some shelter and emergent vegetation. Common and widespread at numerous sites throughout the county such as Attingham Park, Cole Mere, Dudmaston, Discovery Centre at Craven Arms, Pole Cottage and Wildmoor Pool on the Long Mynd, Montgomery Canal, Wyre Forest and Telford Town Park.



Photo: J. Oliver

Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Common and widespread in UK (except Scotland) and Common in Shropshire:

Can be found in a wide variety of habitats from lakes, ponds, slow flowing rivers and streams. Seems to prefer larger bodies of water with tall marginal vegetation. Historic records date back to 1917 at Bomere followed by a sighting at Whixall Moss in 1932. Records increased from the late 1950's onwards and now this is regarded as the most widespread species in Britain and Ireland and is unsurprisingly found throughout Shropshire on all suitable waterbodies.



Photo: B. Hyde

Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*

Locally Common in UK and Local in Shropshire: Usually found on lakes and large ponds, canals and large ditches where there are large areas of floating vegetation, particularly water lilies. Lockton et al., (1996) classified this species as scarce in Shropshire and this has now been upgraded to local. The increase in records largely illustrates an infilling of areas already within the recorded range and the majority of records still lie in the central, northern and eastern areas of the county.



Photo: D. Kitching

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*

Common and widespread in UK and Common in Shropshire:

Can be found in a variety of lowland habitats including canals, pools, ponds, ditches and slow flowing rivers and streams. Will tolerate some pollution.

Lockton et al., (1996) described this species as common and this is most definitely the case today.



Photo: B. Hyde

Explanation of terms used

Local Status

Current local status is given according to the criteria used in The Dragonflies of Shropshire (Lockton et al., 1996):

Rare– present at 3 or fewer breeding sites in the county

Scarce– present at between 3-10 breeding sites in the county

Local– present at 11-50 breeding sites in the county

Common– present (or thought to be) at more than 50 breeding sites, often very abundant in these

National Status

National status is that given in Britain's Dragonflies (Smallshire & Swash, 2018).

References

Cham, S., Nelson, B., Parr, A., Prentice, S., Smallshire, D. and Taylor, P. (2014). Atlas of Dragonflies in Britain and Ireland. Telford: Field Studies Council.

Lockton, A., Bellis, S., Cheeseborough, I. and Whild, S. (1996) The Dragonflies of Shropshire. Shrewsbury: Wildscan Ecological Consultants.

Smallshire, D. and Swash, A. (2018) Britain's Dragonflies: A field guide to the damselflies and dragonflies of Britain and Ireland. 4th ed. Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press.

Odonata Records made at Isle Pool, 2023

Species	Recorder	Date	Site Name	No. adults	Comment
<i>Erythromma najas</i>	S. Rees Evans	24/05/2023	Isle Pool	40	
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	S. Rees Evans	24/05/2023	Isle Pool	40	
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	S. Rees Evans	24/05/2023	Isle Pool	1	
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	S. Rees Evans	24/05/2023	Isle Pool	1	
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	100	
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	100	approx 25 mating pairs and 25 ovipositing pairs
<i>Erythromma najas</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	100	approx 25 mating pairs and 25 ovipositing pairs
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	5	
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	5	2 mating pairs and 2 ovipositing pairs
<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	5	
<i>Anax imperator</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	1	
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	S. Rees Evans	07/06/2023	Isle Pool	4	
<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	S. Rees Evans	21/08/2023	Isle Pool	10	
<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	S. Rees Evans	21/08/2023	Isle Pool	2	
<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	S. Rees Evans	21/08/2023	Isle Pool	1	

Ischnura elegans	S. Rees Evans	21/08/2023	Isle Pool	20	
Aeshna mixta	S. Rees Evans	04/09/2023	Isle Pool	8	
Sympetrum sanguineum	S. Rees Evans	04/09/2023	Isle Pool	1	
Aeshna grandis	S. Rees Evans	04/09/2023	Isle Pool	1	
Ischnura elegans	S. Rees Evans	04/09/2023	Isle Pool	20	
Enallagma cyathigerum	S. Rees Evans	04/09/2023	Isle Pool	5	