

# Dragonflies in Bracknell Forest Borough: Report 2015

## The 2015 Flying Season

During the 2015 flying season, recording effort in the Borough has diminished to some extent compared to the past 25 years., and this factor should be borne in mind when assessing the records below. Altogether, 24 species (see Appendix) were recorded on the wing in the Borough, with evidence of breeding for 19 species.

The weather for dragonflies during the 2015 flying season has been poor. Over the four months from May through to the end of August the weather was dominated by low pressure. In that period, there was not a single sustained spell of dry, sunny weather, although there were one or two short bursts with high daytime temperatures. From May through to the middle of July, the weather was typically cloudy though generally quite dry, causing water levels to fall at some sites. The weather was noticeably windy over this period. Towards the end of July and throughout August rainfall increased significantly. The month of August was unusually wet, with rainfall roughly twice the monthly average. There were spells of settled warm weather early in September and again at the end of the month.

Three species which have been recorded locally are classified under the British Dragonfly Society (BDS) scheme as **nationally-important**. I am not aware of any records for **Brilliant Emerald** in 2015. **Small Red Damselfly** (*Ceriagrion tenellum*) was present at its strongholds of Swinley Brick Pits, Wildmoor and Crowthorne Woods. Des Sussex added a new site record for this species when a singleton was observed at Whitmoor Bog on 5 July 2016. Several of the known sites for this species were not visited during 2015. During 2015 there were no reported sightings of **Scarce Chaser** (*Libellula fulva*), which has been seen in the Borough just once, in 2012.

Five local species have been classified by BDS as **locally-important**. These are: **Hairy Dragonfly** (*Brachytron pratense*), **Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*), **Downy Emerald** (*Cordulia aenea*), **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** (*Cordulagaster boltonii*), and **Keeled Skimmer** (*Orthetrum coerulescens*). For the seventh successive year male **Hairy Dragonfly** (*Brachytron pratense*) has been recorded at Swinley Brick Pits. We still await the first local records of females and breeding activity. There were no confirmed records for **Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*), although at Wildmoor on 7 September Mike Turton had a brief glimpse of what looked very like one from the size and flight pattern. **Downy Emerald** was reported at several sites, with increased numbers at Crowthorne Woods. Records for **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** included a female egg-laying in the ditch system at Crowthorne Woods. **Keeled Skimmer** was reported in good numbers from several sites; it was recorded for the first time at Whitmoor Bog by Des Sussex.

Records of **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** (*Erythromma viridulum*) stabilized in 2015. It was recorded in good numbers at both Felix Farm Trout Fishery, Binfield and Allsmoor Pond, and there was a record of a singleton male at Crowthorne Woods. There were no records for **White-legged Damselfly** (*Platycnemis pennipes*) in 2015 because no recorder had a permit to enter its single known local site, Butter Bottom Ponds, Crowthorne. Amongst other species, there were several records for **Beautiful Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx virgo*) from Wildmoor Heath, obtained by the BBOWT recording team, and Des Sussex also reported this species from Chaucer Woods.

There was one early flight record this year. Mike Turton came across a **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** at Wildmoor on 7 June 2015. The one late flying record was a telephone report of a male **Southern Hawker** seen at Wildmoor on Friday 27th November, an exceptionally late date for the Borough,

eclipsing the former record of 19 November, established in 2010 and 2014. (In the rest of England, with the very mild December weather, there were a number of exceptionally late flying records. Southern Hawkers were seen on 5<sup>th</sup> December (Worcs) and 9<sup>th</sup> December (Wiltshire); on 22<sup>nd</sup> December a Migrant Hawker was reported in Lancashire; finally sightings of Common Darter were reported on 26<sup>th</sup> December (Devon) and 27<sup>th</sup> December (Nottinghamshire)).

## Appendix Dragonflies and Damselflies Recorded in Bracknell Forest Borough since 2008

<b>Damselflies</b>		<b>Recorded 2015</b>	<b>Recorded Breeding 2015</b>
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Yes	No
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Yes	No
Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	Yes	Yes
White-legged Damselfly	<i>Platycnemis pennipes</i>	No	No
Small Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>	Yes	Yes
Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>	Yes	Yes
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	Yes	Yes
Small Red Damselfly**	<i>Ceriagrion tenellum</i>	Yes	Yes
Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Yes	Yes
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Yes	Yes
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Yes	Yes
<b>Dragonflies</b>		<b>Recorded 2015</b>	<b>Recorded Breeding 2015</b>
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Yes	No
Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Yes	Yes
Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	Yes	Yes
Common Hawker*	<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	No	No
Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	Yes	Yes
Lesser Emperor	<i>Anax Parthenope</i>	No	No
Hairy Dragonfly*	<i>Brachytron pretense</i>	Yes	No
Golden-ringed Dragonfly *	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Yes	Yes
Downy Emerald*	<i>Cordulia aenea</i>	Yes	No
Brilliant Emerald**	<i>Somatochlora metallica</i>	No	No
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Yes	Yes
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Yes	Yes
Scarce Chaser**	<i>Libellula fulva</i>	No	No
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	Yes	Yes
Keeled Skimmer*	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	Yes	Yes
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Yes	Yes
Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	Yes	Yes
Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>	Yes	Yes
<b>Totals 2015</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>

\*\* Nationally important species

\* Locally important species