

# Dragonflies in Bracknell Forest Borough: Final Report 2018

## The 2018 Flying Season

It is satisfying to report that, over the Borough as a whole, recording effort has increased during 2018, reversing a trend of recent years. The increasing use of the recording app iRecord appears to be an important factor in the improved scenario. Wildmoor Heath Nature Reserve has been particularly well surveyed; here the county wildlife trust, BBOWT, maintains an active recording programme during the flight season. Altogether, 26 species (see Appendix) were recorded on the wing in the Borough during 2018, with evidence of breeding for 15 species. It was an exceptionally hot summer, and the months of June and July provided optimal breeding conditions for dragonflies.

Three species which have been recorded locally are classified under the British Dragonfly Society (BDS) scheme as **nationally-important**. In 2018, there was just one record of **Brilliant Emerald** (*Somatochlora metallica*); a singleton was photographed by Alan Holmes on the River Blackwater near Horseshoe Lake. **Small Red Damselfly** (*Ceragrion tenellum*) was reported from several sites, including Crowthorne Woods, Wildmoor, Mill Pond and Rapley Lake. During 2018 there were no reported sightings of **Scarce Chaser** (*Libellula fulva*), which has been seen in the Borough just once, on the River Blackwater at Sandhurst in 2012.

Five local species are 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*). **Hairy Dragonfly** (*Brachytron pratense*) was recorded on one occasion, at Swinley Brick Pits. For the second year running, there were no reported sightings of **Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*). **Downy Emerald** was only recorded at three sites: Mill Pond (Swinley Forest), Swinley Brick Pits and Butter Bottom Ponds. **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** was recorded at Wildmoor and the Embankment, Swinley Forest. **Keeled Skimmer** was present in good numbers at several sites, including Wildmoor and Crowthorne Woods.

Amongst other species, it is pleasing to report that several teneral **White-legged Damselfly** (*Platycnemis pennipes*) were recorded at Butter Bottom Ponds, its only local site, indicating that the species is still breeding there. In the north of the Borough **Beautiful Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx virgo*) was recorded on the River Cut at Binfield Manor by Nick Percival, and away from water by David White at Binfield Cemetery. To the south, there were records for this species on the River Blackwater, but these were just outside the Borough. **Black Darter** (*Sympetrum danae*) was present at Crowthorne Woods but was otherwise under-recorded. It is pleasing to report that **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** (*Erythromma viridulum*) was recorded (Alan Holmes) in 2018 on Horseshoe Lake.

Some six years have elapsed since records have been obtained at two important sites: the ponds at Wellington College and those at RMA, Sandhurst. These are sites requiring a permit for access; they are both important for the **Brilliant Emerald** and the wide range of other species they support.

Finally, it is worth noting that the **Willow Emerald Damselfly** (*Chalcolestes viridis*), which is a relatively new arrival in England and is spreading in a westerly direction from East Anglia, was recorded for the first time in 2018 in a part of Windsor Great Park just outside the Borough. The species only has to move 2 or 3 miles further west to arrive in the Borough, so is well worth looking out for in 2019.

My thanks to Mike Turton (Berkshire recorder) for providing records submitted directly to him.

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

| <b>Damselflies</b>        |                                 | <b>Recorded 2018</b> | <b>Recorded Breeding 2018</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>     | Yes                  | Yes                           |
| Small Red-eyed Damselfly  | <i>Erythromma viridulum</i>     | Yes                  | No                            |
| 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 2018</b> | <b>Recorded Breeding 2018</b> |
| Migrant Hawker            | <i>Aeshna mixta</i>             | Yes                  | Yes                           |
| Southern Hawker           | <i>Aeshna cyanea</i>            | Yes                  | No                            |
| Brown Hawker              | <i>Aeshna grandis</i>           | Yes                  | No                            |
| 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                  | No                            |
| Downy Emerald*            | <i>Cordulia aenea</i>           | Yes                  | Yes                           |
| Brilliant Emerald**       | <i>Somatochlora metallica</i>   | Yes                  | No                            |
| Four-spotted Chaser       | <i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i> | Yes                  | Yes                           |
| Broad-bodied Chaser       | <i>Libellula depressa</i>       | Yes                  | No                            |
| 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                  | No                            |
| Black Darter              | <i>Sympetrum danae</i>          | Yes                  | No                            |
| <b>Totals 2018</b>        |                                 | <b>26</b>            | <b>15</b>                     |

\*\* Nationally important species

\* Locally important species

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