

Dragonflies in Bracknell Forest Borough: Final Report 2016

The 2016 Flying Season

Recording effort in the Borough has diminished somewhat in recent years, and this factor should be borne in mind when assessing the 2016 records below. Altogether, 26 species (see Appendix) were recorded on the wing in the Borough, with evidence of breeding for 15 species.

The 2016 flying season started slowly. Through May there were occasional sunny days, but there were many rainy days, often featuring intense downpours. There were some fine days at the very end of May, and at the start of June a succession of warm, sunny days provided ideal flying conditions. Rainy conditions again took over towards the middle of June and continued to the end of the month. Although July was relatively dry, it was also cloudy. At the end of July brighter, sunny conditions took over and favourable weather for dragonflies continued through most of August and in to the first two weeks of September.

Three species which have been recorded locally are classified under the British Dragonfly Society (BDS) scheme as **nationally-important**. **Brilliant Emerald** was observed at Swinley Brick Pits and Rapley Lake during 2016. **Small Red Damselfly** (*Ceriagrion tenellum*) was present at its strongholds of Swinley Brick Pits, Wildmoor and Crowthorne Woods, and was also recorded at Rapley Lake, and Mill Pond in Swinley Forest. Several of the known sites for this species were not visited during 2016. During 2016 there were no reported sightings of **Scarce Chaser** (*Libellula fulva*), which has been seen in the Borough just once, 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*) is now a local regular and in 2016 there were signs it is expanding on to new sites. Males were again recorded at Swinley Brick Pits, where the first local breeding record, a female ovipositing, was obtained. This species was also recorded at Felix Farm Trout Fishery, Binfield, Crowthorne Wood, and Wildmoor. **Downy Emerald** was reported at several sites, with increased numbers at Crowthorne Woods. Records for **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** were generally satisfactory, with a new site record near Rapley Lake, and several were recorded on newly-opened ditch systems within Swinley Forest. An interesting record (Dominic Mackenzie) for this species was obtained well away from water at Peacock Meadows. **Keeled Skimmer** was present in good numbers at several sites, including Wildmoor and Crowthorne Woods. It is pleasing to report that there were three records (Vicky Potts) for **Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*) in 2016, all at Wildmoor Heath.

Amongst other species, **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** (*Erythromma viridulum*) was recorded at both Felix Farm Trout Fishery, Binfield and Allsmoor Pond. There were no confirmed records for **White-legged Damselfly** (*Platycnemis pennipes*) in 2016 because no recorder had a permit to enter its single known local site, Butter Bottom Ponds, Crowthorne. There were several records for **Beautiful Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx virgo*) including Wildmoor Heath (Des Sussex, Brian Crathorne), River Blackwater and a new site record at Felix Farm Trout Fishery, Binfield.

It is worth noting that the recent management work within Swinley Forest to remove rhododendron, where this has also been associated with the clearance of drainage ditch lines, has benefitted certain species during the 2016 flying season. This work has increased the numbers of **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** records in the Mill Pond/Rapley Farm area, and contributed a new site record at Rapley

Lake. Again, within Swinley Forest, forestry work at Gormoor over the past two years has significantly opened up the area to the benefit of dragonflies.

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

Appendix Dragonflies and Damselflies Recorded in Bracknell Forest Borough since 2008

Damselflies		Recorded 2016	Recorded Breeding 2016
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>	Yes	No
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Yes	Yes
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	No
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
Dragonflies		Recorded 2016	Recorded Breeding 2016
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>	Yes	No
Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	Yes	Yes
Lesser Emperor	<i>Anax Parthenope</i>	No	No
Hairy Dragonfly*	<i>Brachytron pretense</i>	Yes	Yes
Golden-ringed Dragonfly *	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Yes	No
Downy Emerald*	<i>Cordulia aenea</i>	Yes	No
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
Totals 2016		26	15

** Nationally important species

* Locally important species