

INSECTS AT CARR VALE IN 1998.

This section of the report is concerned only with Dragonflies, Damselflies and Butterflies recorded within the Carr Vale recording area. The records are drawn from casual observations by M A Beevers, D & S Came, D Hursthouse and A Irons.

1998 was generally a poor year for insects but nevertheless several new species were added to the areas list. These were Red-eyed Damsel, Common Hawker and Holly Blue. The first Butterfly of the year was a Small Tortoiseshell on 17th February, then two Peacocks were seen on 19th March and these were quickly followed by other sightings of this species on 22nd March on which date two Brimstones were recorded. Few Butterflies of note were recorded until a Comma was seen on 3rd May on which date the first of four of the months sightings of Holly Blue was made. This was a new species for Carr Vale although it is likely that in the past it was overlooked. Painted Ladies were very scarce (as last year) with singles seen on 22nd and 23rd June and one or two Comma's were noted on five dates in the last two weeks of July. Single Brimstone and Holly Blue's were seen on 11th August and another Painted Lady appeared on 29th August. A Clouded Yellow was seen on 1st September and another flew south on 20th September with a Comma noted the day before.

The first Damselfly of the year was a Large Red on 15th May with Blue-tailed Damselflies noted from 20th May, whilst on 1st June a male Broad-bodied Chaser was seen along with three Four-spotted Chasers. Highlight of the month was a Red-eyed Damsel which was found adjacent to the Vale Angling pond by somebody looking for the Common Rosefinch on 6th June. This species could have been predicted with breeding colonies both north and south of the area but it was nevertheless a very good find. Later in the month two Broad-bodied Chasers and six Four-spotted Chasers were seen on 23rd June. On 16th July Southern Hawker, Emperor Dragonfly and three Four-spotted Chasers were seen with Brown Hawkers noted from 26th July. The first Migrant Hawker was seen on 16th August and both Brown and Southern Hawkers were noted during the month. A pair of Black-tailed Skimmers was seen on 7th August but undoubtedly the best day of the year for Dragonflies was 27th August when four Brown Hawkers, two Emperors, one Common Hawker, one Four-spotted Chaser, one Black-tailed Skimmer and the only Ruddy Darters (three) for the year were all recorded by a casual visitor (D. Hursthouse). During September only Brown and Migrant Hawkers along with Common Darters were seen and despite the addition of two species to the list for Carr Vale there was no doubt that 1998 was a poor year for these insects.