

Ogston Dragonfly 'Report' 2002 by Jim Alder

I think this could be the first time a Dragonfly report has been written for Ogston Reservoir, though to call it a report may be going too far, I'd rather refer to it as an "account" of the 'Dragoning' that a few of the members have been lured into over the summer after the excitement of the spring bird migration has calmed down and the Osprey has almost become a tiresome sight. (well, 5 sightings in a day - I ask you!).

Obviously, to those of you who've down to the reservoir lately, Ogston is quite a large expanse of open water on the whole, the edges of which are not particularly accessible partly due to its SSSI conservation status. However, the best areas for 'Dragoning' have been the area around the members hide where the smaller bodies of water are i.e. The kingfisher pond, the Dragonfly Pond and the scrapes to the front of the hide. These shallower ponds with abundant vegetation also provide a more favorable habitat for our quarry and not just for Kingfishers, Water Rails and Walter.

It should be pointed out that the records gathered were done so as a result of learning about dragon and damselflies by several distracted bird club members and as such were not the result of any strict process or method of biological recording. That said, over numerous days from early July to early November some sightings were noted and even appeared on the websites daily bird report.

As I have mentioned, the records I have start in July and so I do not have any records for Large Red Damselfly from last year as they are one of the first Damsels to appear around mid May and sightings get scarcer beyond mid July. I'm sure given their widespread and common status that this species will be breeding at Ogston and that some of the other group members may have records of.

So.... not including our early friend the Large Red Damsel, nine species were recorded this year as follows:

Zygotera - Damselflies; Azure Damselfly, Blue-Tailed Damselfly and Common Blue Damselfly.

Anisoptera - Dragonflies; Common Darter, Broad-Bodied Chaser, Four Spotted Chaser, Brown Hawker, Southern Hawker, Migrant Hawker.

The most numerous species were Common Darter and Brown Hawker but there were regular sightings of Southern and Migrant Hawkets around the Kingfisher pond, some of which were good enough to pose for the camera's or grace my net for closer inspection in the hand. (contrary to popular belief, they Dragonflies don't sting!!!)

Some notable records were Brenda Wilson's Four Spotted Chaser on the 4th August, which Brenda managed to catch on 'film' (or whatever its called on a digital camera) - This splendid shot is displayed in the members hide along with some belting shots of Common Darter and Southern Hawker by Steve Freeman.

The 'bit of action' which entertained myself and a couple of other lucky observers was the sad demise of a female Broad Bodied Chaser which only seconds after finding her waiting male and mating, was caught by a Female Moorhen and fed to one of her young.

Later on in the year, work began on creating new scrapes and extended existing ones. The Dragonfly pond which was getting choked with Phragmites was cleared and some old logs were placed around the margins for Dragonflies to lay their eggs on. All being well, this can only have served to improve the habitat for Dragon and Damselflies. Fingers crossed.

Hopefully this summer myself and a couple of the other members who were also new to the Dragoning scene will dust down our Dragonfly guides and get recording the minute the first Large Reds are on the wing and perhaps we can also add a few more species to the list and also cover other parts of the recording area where access permits.

For those of you with internet access, all the Dragonfly records for Ogston this year can be found can be found on the www.derbyshire-dragonflies.org.uk website.