

Record your sightings

Recorder's name _____

Date seen _____

Location's name _____

Grid reference _____

Species and estimated number seen (latter optional)

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Report your sightings

Simply visit the BDS website and click on the **Submit your records** page to add your records into our iRecord database.

www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

Image credits: Front Cover Norfolk Hawker, Paul Ritchie; Migrant Hawker, David Kitching; Blue-tailed Damselfly, Gareth William Tons. Charity Number: 1168300 (England and Wales), SC049416 (Scotland).



Beginner's guide to recording
Dragonflies

Where to find dragonflies

Dragonflies breed in a variety of **freshwater wetlands**, ranging from urban ponds to upland bogs, depending on the species. While these are the best places to go looking for dragonflies you may also encounter adults away from the water, such as in long grass or woodland glades, where they may be hunting or seeking refuge.

The best time of year to see adult Dragonflies is **between May and September**, although different species have different flight periods during these months.

Dragonflies are most active when the **weather is dry, calm and sunny** so these are the best conditions to see them in.

Useful equipment

Mid-range **binoculars** (e.g. 8x32mm), or close focusing binoculars (e.g. 6.5x21mm), can both be useful when identifying dragonflies in the field.

A number of great **dragonfly identification field guides** are available, which you can buy from the BDS online shop.

Carrying a **camera** can be a good idea so that you can photograph dragonflies for identification later.

You will also need **writing material** to take note of your sightings with, and a **GPS** (or GPS phone app) can be useful in identifying the exact location of your sightings.

Tips for identifying a species

When trying to identify a dragonfly work through the following questions to narrow down the list of potential candidates:

1. Is it a Dragonfly or a Damselfly?

Damselflies. . .

- have a weak, fluttering flight
- rest with wings held together
- have small eyes separate on the head
- are small, delicate and thin bodies

Dragonflies. . .

- have a strong, direct flight
- usually rest with wings held open
- have large eyes that usually touch
- are larger and more robust



2. What time of year is it?

Different species are in flight at different times of year. For example, adult Norfolk Hawker (*Anaciaeschna isoceles*) are usually seen from May to July while the Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*) is usually in flight from July to October.

3. Where was it found?

Some species are widespread across the UK while others are more localised. For example, Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) can easily be found across Britain, but the Northern Damselfly (*Coenagrion hastulatum*) is restricted to a few locations in the Highlands. Britain also experience influxes of migratory species as well as rarer vagrants, such as the Vagrant Emperor (*Anax ephippiger*) which has been recorded at scattered locations across Britain.

4. What habitat was it found in?

Some species, such as the Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*), are found in a variety of freshwater habitats while others are more specialised, such as the White-faced Darter (*Leucorrhinia dubia*) which only breeds in bog pools with floating bog moss.