

BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS
Heritage & Nature Reserve

DRAGONFLIES

2024

This proved to be a difficult year for recording insects on the site. The unsettled weather, together with the recorders lack of mobility, resulted in in far fewer visits to the site.

Having said that, it proved to be an exciting year in respect of new additions to the site list ! A relatively common species, Four-spotted Chaser dragonfly, had never been seen on the site until I finally found one on the Dew Pond in the Headstocks meadow on 07/06/2024.

The Four-spotted Chaser was expected, but the other new species for the site was totally unexpected. A regular visitor to the site, Dr. Mike McCormick from Hucknall, is a keen and very competent photographer, with an interest in nature. On 18/09/24, he sent me a couple of photos he had taken on the site the previous day. One of the photos was a damselfly, which threw me into an excited panic – it was one of three possible species, none of which had been seen on the site before. After consulting my reference books I was fairly certain that it was a Willow Emerald Damselfly and the identification was confirmed by the Nottinghamshire dragonfly recorder. I rushed down to the site the following day and after an anxious wait I finally saw at least two adults of this species on the Dipping pond. They are quite difficult to locate, spending most of their time in the trees, but do come down to lower vegetation in sunny conditions.

As a result of these two new site records, the site list now stands at 13 species.

BANDED DEMOISELLE *Calopteryx splendens*

No records of this species in 2024. The last record was in 2019, when a total of four were seen.

WILLOW EMERALD DAMSELFLY *Chalcolestes viridis*



Photograph by Dr Mike McCormick

See the comments above. The exciting discovery of this new colonist to the U.K. at the Headstocks nature reserve has piqued the interest of local dragonfly enthusiasts and nature lovers in general. They are unique among dragonflies in that they lay their eggs in incisions in the bark of trees overhanging ponds, with the larvae dropping into the water when they hatch. The site owners have been made aware of this and are managing the site to suit the insect's requirements.

LARGE RED DAMSELFLY *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*



Photograph by John Eyre

Two were on the Dewpond on June 24th and a single there on July 9th 2024. The first site record for this species was of a single insect seen on the Dipping Pond on June 18th 2014.

COMMON BLUE DAMSELFLY *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Normally a common insect, there was just a single record for 2024. Five were seen on the Dew Pond on June 24th.

BLUE-TAILED DAMSELFLY *Ischnura elegans*

This species did seem to be established on the site, with three records in 2015. However, disappointingly, there have been no records since then.

SOUTHERN HAWKER *Aeshna claneai*

This species is often seen away from the ponds, hunting along the wooded rides. Singles were observed on June 7th, July 9th and August 20th 2024.

AZURE DAMSELFLY *Coenagrion puella*



Photograph by John Eyre

The only record of this species was of four on the Dipping Pond on 9th July 2024 including a pair mating. The first site record of this species was in 2015.

MIGRANT HAWKER *Aeshna mixta*

Normally a scarce insect on the site, there was an increase in records in 2024 with two on the Dipping Pond on September 21st, and a single in Willow Holt on October 19th. The first site record for this species was in 2014.

EMPEROR *Anax imperator*

This species is a site rarity, with the only previous record being as far back as 2012. It was, therefore a lovely surprise to observe a single insect over the Dew Pond on July 9th 2024.

BROWN HAWKER *Aeshna grandis*

No doubt the lack of coverage in 2024 was the reason that there was only one record of this species in 2024 – a single over the Headstocks Meadow on July 9th. This species is usually recorded on numerous occasions.

FOUR-SPOTTED CHASER *Libellula quadrimaculata*

This is quite a common species locally, but does not seem to find the Headstocks reserve to it's liking. It was therefore exciting to observe a single insect of this species over the Dew Pond on June 7th 2024 – the first site record !

BROAD-BODIED CHASER *Libellula depressa*

In the past, this species has often spent the entire summer on territory over the Dew Pond, but disappointingly there have been no records since 2014.

COMMON DARTER *Sympetrum striolatum*

Normally, this species is recorded in good numbers in late summer, but 2024 was a disappointing year, with only a single record of a female on August 20th.

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