

## WETLAND SPOTTER SHEET

# DRAGONFLIES

### Want to become an instant dragonfly expert?

6 of the more common dragonflies in the UK are listed here.

Head to your nearest wetland and see how many you can find.

Dragon and damselflies need healthy wetlands with good water quality to thrive.

### Is it a dragonfly?

- Larger than a damselfly
- Wings open at rest
- Eyes touching at top of head
- Flight strong and purposeful, often aggressive fighters in the sky



#### Southern hawker

*Aeshna cyanea*



- Emerge July to September, flight season until November

Size: 70mm

- Likely to be found by small garden ponds but can fly far
- Fast and powerful in flight, inquisitive species
- Banding more distinctive than on other hawkers



#### Emperor

*Anax imperator*



- Flight season is May to September

Size: 78mm

- Likes large lakes and ponds but is widespread
- Patrol ponds several metres above the water
- Agile in the air and can eat prey on the wing



#### Four-spotted chaser

*Libellula quadrimaculata*



- Emerge in May and June

Size: 39-48mm

- Favours wetland margins.
- There are sometimes evening swarms over water
- Dark spot on each wing – this is why its called a four-spotted chaser



#### Broad-bodied chaser

*Libellula depressa*



- Can be seen during May – early August

Size: 39-48mm

- Is an early pond coloniser and territorial to its perch
- Only males have blue colouring on the body
- Broad appearance helps tell it apart



#### Black darter

*Sympetrum danae*



- Emerges late June to early October

Size: 29-34mm

- Likes peat moss, bog pools and ditches
- Black markings are a thermo-regulatory function in cold weather
- Males are not territorial and has erratic flight



#### Common darter

*Sympetrum striolatum*



- Emerge early morning during April-October

Size: 38-43mm

- Likes small garden ponds and even semi-salty water
- Perches on the ground and returns to same spot
- Appears similar to Ruddy darter

# DAMSELFLIES

Damselflies are in the same species order as dragonflies, but with a few key differences.

Here are six of the most common damselflies in the UK that you might see.

## Is it a damselfly?

- Smaller than a dragonfly
- Wings closed at rest
- Eyes not touching at top of head – to help them ambush prey from vegetation
- Flight weak and fluttering, they don't engage in aerial combat



### Banded demoiselle

*Calopteryx splendens*



- Flies April - September
- Found by slow-flowing rivers and muddy areas
- The female has a bronze tip to her body
- The male has a dark band across the wing, the females are pale green

Size: 45mm



### Common blue damselfly

*Enallagma cyathigerum*



- Emerge April to August
- It is the open water and large lake blue damselfly
- Perch on low veg and fly off in pursuit of passing prey
- Females can be blue or green grey

Size: 32mm



### Azure damselfly

*Coenagrion puella*



- Emerge early May to mid-June until September
- 95% population emerge in 3 weeks
- Can only live in healthy, unpolluted wetlands
- Very hard to tell apart from common blue, look for the black spur on thorax

Size: 33mm



### Blue-tailed damselfly

*Ischnura elegans*



- April – September (sometimes early October)
- Males have a light-blue spot at tail
- Colonises new ponds early and likes still waters
- Variety of thorax colour forms-red, violet, blue, green

Size: 31mm



### Emerald damselfly

*Lestes sponsa*



- Flies from late June – early September
- Likes standing water, ponds and ditches
- Hides in reeds, rushes or other dense vegetation
- Perches with wings half open

Size: 38mm



### Large red damselfly

*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*



- Flies March - September
- Widespread but, avoids fast flowing water
- Males emerge before female
- Small red damselfly also has red legs and wing spots

Size: 33-36mm