

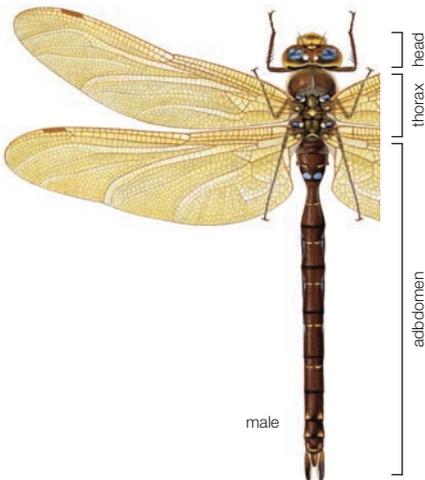
What else lives by the pond?

Guide to dragonflies and damselflies

Dragonflies and damselflies are the acrobats of the insect world and with their stunning colours are a true sign of summer. They are skilful hunters with excellent eyesight, flying at speeds of up to 22.5 mph (36 km/h). The species we see today are almost identical to their ancestors which flew over 300 million years ago. There are 42 species that live year-round in the UK. This chart shows six easy to identify species that you might see when you're spending time around the pond taking part in the **OPAL Water Survey**.  This symbol shows the flying season for each species.

HINT Don't try to identify dragonflies and damselflies as they fly past – they're too quick! Wait for them to settle, then you can see them clearly. All pictures are life size.

Tell us what you see! It's really important for us to find out which dragonflies and damselflies are living near you. Enter your sightings at www.OPALexploreNature.org.



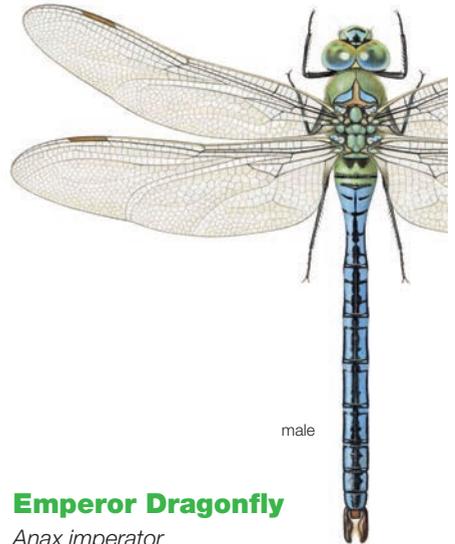
Brown Hawker

Aeshna grandis

A brown dragonfly with amber tinted wings. Males have blue spots on their sides. Seen near water, or in woodland and along hedgerows as it hunts.



Late June – early October



Emperor Dragonfly

Anax imperator

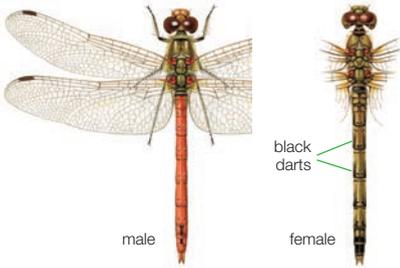
The largest of the UK dragonflies. Males have a bright blue abdomen and green thorax. Females are all green. Both have a dark central line. Seen near well-vegetated ponds, lakes and canals.



Late May – early September



Always exercise caution around water: please see health and safety guidance at www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/watersafety



male

female

black darts

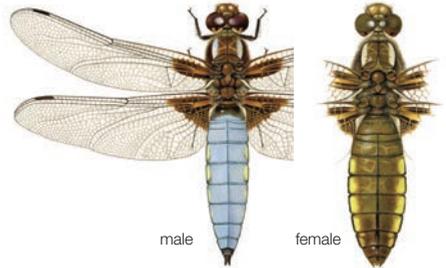
Common Darter

Sympetrum striolatum

Males have an orange/red abdomen. Females are yellow or light brown with black darts. Both have yellow leg stripes. Seen near most water bodies, often perched on warm surfaces.



Mid June – late October



male

female

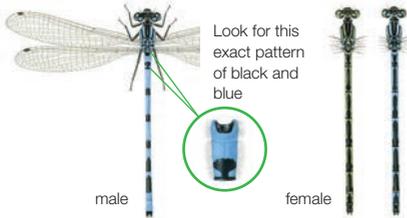
Broad-bodied Chaser

Libellula depressa

This dragonfly has a distinctive wide body. Males are powdery blue with yellow side spots. Females are yellow-brown, and may be seen dropping eggs into the water.



May – late July



male

female

Look for this exact pattern of black and blue

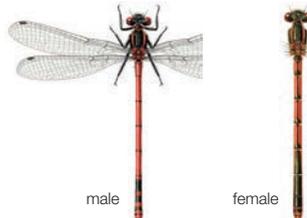
Common Blue Damselfly

Enallagma cyathigerum

The fast-flying bright blue males are often seen near still or slow flowing water. Can be confused with the Azure Damselfly, so look for this exact pattern of black and blue. Females have black markings and can either be blue or dull green.



Mid May – late September



male

female

Large Red Damselfly

Pyrhosoma nymphula

More delicate than the Common Darter. Males are mainly red, with a black tip to the body, black legs and distinctive red eyes. Females are generally darker with black eyes. Seen near still or slow flowing water.



Mid April – early September



Dragonflies in Focus project – dragonflies are threatened by habitat destruction and climate change which is why the British Dragonfly Society has launched the Dragonflies in Focus project. This five-year project includes a nationwide survey to produce a new atlas of the current distribution of Britain's dragonflies. Understanding where and how quickly our dragonflies are moving will help conservation plans for the future, to make sure wildlife is provided with the best opportunities to react to change. Get involved at www.dragonflysoc.org.uk

Text by Steve Pentice (British Dragonfly Society) and Lucy Carter (Natural History Museum). Illustrations are © Richard Lewington and have been reproduced with permission from *Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland*.