



BRDRS News

Bristol Region Dragonfly Recording Scheme

Autumn 2007



White-legged Damselfly

Jon Mortin

The White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* is not the most widely known or commonly occurring damselfly. Nevertheless we have 334 records of this species on our database. The species is generally found on the slower flowing stretches of rivers and canals. Nearly all our records are from the Avon, Frome and

Chew rivers, as the distribution map below shows. Sometimes the damselflies wander off to nearby meadows and several of our recent records (e.g. Stoke Park, Purdown and Troopers Hill) fit into this pattern.

The species is characterised, as the name would suggest, by creamy white legs. In particular, the tibia (lower section) of the hind legs is broad, white and feather-like with a very thin black stripe and a fringe of black hairs. The other legs are also white with a fringe of black hairs but with a much thicker black stripe running down their length. The species is also much lighter in coloration than other damselflies. These features can all be seen in this excellent photograph taken by Tony Cottrell at Purdown in June.

The species is said to be making a comeback in many areas where rivers are no longer stripped of bank-side vegetation. So it is a species worth keeping a look out for and don't forget to send in any records!



White-legged Damselfly - Tony Cottrell

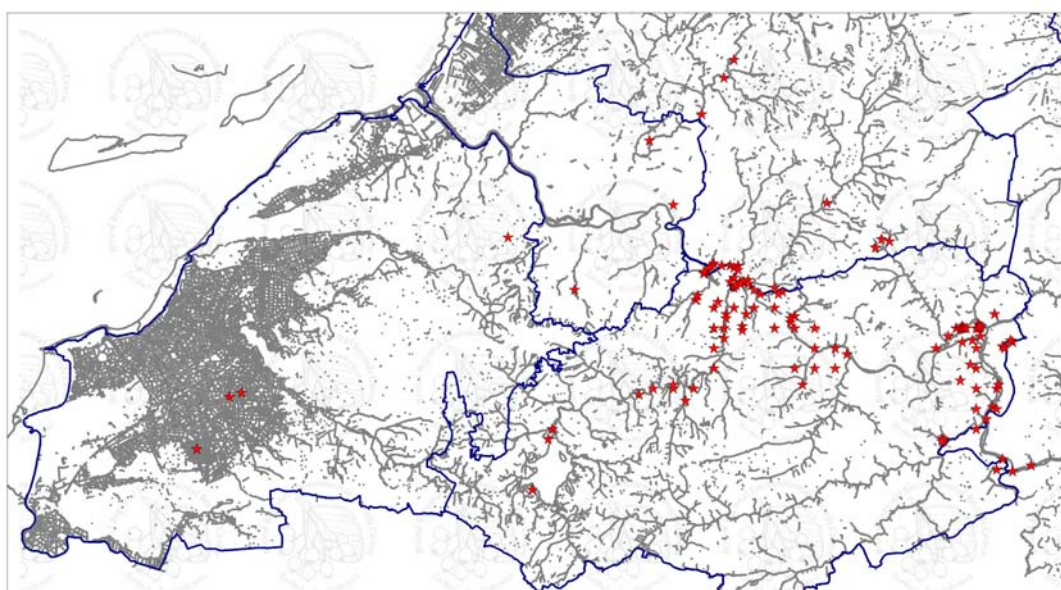
White-legged Damselfly Distribution

Compiled by BRERC on 27 September 2007



Scale 1:202615

BRERC
Third Floor
Bristol Central Library
College Green, Bristol
BS1 5TL



This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Gloucestershire Council Licence No 100623410, 2007.

Southern Emerald Damselfly

Old news – from 2006, but worth a mention I thought! We had a record last year for a Southern Emerald Damselfly *Lestes barbarus* – it was accompanied by photographs, which are essential for all such records of new species to the area. I've had a look at the photos and I'm fairly sure it is a Southern Emerald. The plan was to revisit this year and try and find some again but the weather and work commitments got in the way!

The nice thing about the Southern Emerald is its bi-coloured pterostigma which is diagnostic in the emeralds (the filled-in 'cell' near the wing tip is two colours).

Mike Dimery who found the beast says "it was really odd the way it cropped up. It was late in the summer and there was very little variety left along the riverbank, just the odd Blue-tailed Damselfly plus the remains of the summer explosion of Migrant Hawkers. The riverside path goes through the edge of farmland and I spotted this odd looking, and rather large, damselfly on the edge of a field of what I think may have been flax/linseed. I snapped it, without knowing what it was, and I was trying to be careful not to damage the crop. Had I known what it was I may have risked a few stalks!"

The Southern Emerald was first recorded in Britain from Norfolk in 2002, with records there and in Kent during 2003 and 2004. No records were made during 2005. Southern Emerald is mainly Mediterranean in distribution becoming progressively more local northwards to Jersey with only a few isolated colonies in Belgium, Holland and Denmark. In the UK an east coast site is the most likely to be colonised by this species, the River Avon is somewhat unexpected.



Southern Emerald Damselfly - Mike Dimery

School Holiday Diary

Bee Peters

An August visit to Tyntesfield with three grandchildren under six:

Weather – perfectly calm, clear and warm.

Favourite moment – kneeling around the kitchen garden pond watching a female Southern Hawker ovipositing, before our eyes. So many questions being asked. Then waterboatmen and pondskaters were noticed with more excitement and more questions.

What kind of creatures?

Why doesn't it sink?

How long do they stay under?

As the dragonfly flew on her way we looked around to find lots of smiling faces, and it wasn't just the children who wanted to know more. It made me realise how we often take for granted what adults understand about wildlife.

Autumn Odonata

By the time you read this the traditional dragonfly season will be nearly over, but there is still time, weather permitting. The most common species to see in Autumn are the darters which can still be out in good numbers, but others are also around. Looking at the

Small Red-eyed Damselfly

Abigail Pedlow

In the last newsletter before I went on maternity leave I almost did an article on "*Small Red-eyed Damselflies coming soon*" but decided that it would tempt fate too much, they'd be bound not to turn up till 2012 if I did that.

And it worked! Our first record in 2006, was from a pond on the campus of Bath University.

This photo was taken at Orchard Pools at Severn Beach last year, and they were there this year as well.



Small Red-eyed Damselfly - John P. Martin

British Dragonfly Society newsletter; eight species were last recorded in October, three in November and two (Southern Hawker and Common Darter) in December. This is for 2006, an extremely mild autumn. So if it's a mild day, whatever the month – it's worth visiting your favourite site to see what turns up!