



London
Natural
History
Society

LNHS LEARNING

About the London Natural History Society

The London Natural History Society traces its history back to 1858. The Society is made up of a number of active sections that provide a wide range of talks, organised nature walks, coach trips and other activities. This range of events makes the LNHS one of the most active natural history societies in the world. Whether it is purely for recreation, or to develop field skills for a career in conservation, the LNHS offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Beginners are welcome at every event and gain access to the knowledge of some very skilled naturalists.

On top of its varied public engagement, the LNHS also provides a raft of publications free to members. The London Naturalist is its annual journal with scientific papers as well as lighter material such as book reviews. The annual London Bird Report published since 1937 sets a benchmark for publications of this genre. Furthermore, there is a quarterly Newsletter that carries many trip reports and useful announcements.

The LNHS maintains its annual membership subscription at a modest level, representing fantastic value for money.

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The selection of species is a subjective decision of the contributor(s) and not based on quantitative criteria such as population numbers, database records or presence on recording grids in surveys. These PDFs are not available in print form from the LNHS.

Taking your interest further

Details of other organizations with an interest in wildlife and a whole host of information is on the LNHS website. Past copies of the printed LNHS publications are available from Catherine Schmitt. Details on www.lnhs.org.uk.

Contributing to the LNHS Education Series

If you would like to contribute to LNHS Learning please get in touch with one of the following section chairpersons in the LNHS or Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne who is coordinating the series.

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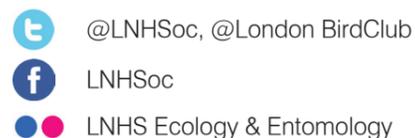
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LNHS Ecology & Entomology

10 Dragonflies of London



10 Dragonflies of London

Banded Demoiselle

(*Calopteryx splendens*)

A distinctly sexually dimorphic species; the male with a metallic blue body and dark bands on the wings while the females are brilliant green.

Along with Beautiful Demoiselle our largest damselfly species and frequents slow moving rivers and streams. Both species have a slow butterfly like fluttering flight.



Common Blue Damselfly

(*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

One of two very similar common species which often occur at the same sites. Close views of thoracic markings and the patterns on the abdomen are needed to distinguish it from the Azure Damselfly. Blue damselfly over the middle of the lake are usually Common Blue Damselfly.

Blue-tailed Damselfly

(*Ischnura elegans*)

A very widespread species which is relatively tolerant of pollution and often found in the smallest of ponds. It tends to be found amongst the surrounding vegetation rather than out over the water and can be found in good numbers. The females occur in a number of colour forms which can be confusing for the beginner.



Large Red Damselfly

(*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*)

A very widespread damselfly and the first species to emerge each year from April onwards. It is the only red damselfly to be seen in most of the London area and the black legs are diagnostic. This species normally takes two years to complete its life-cycle.

Southern Hawker

(*Ischnura elegans*)

A large attractive species which prefers ponds with a certain amount of cover. It is frequent at woodland ponds and will breed in small garden ponds.

A very inquisitive species that will fly up close to an observer but like all dragonflies is totally harmless. Best looked for from July to early October.



Migrant Hawker

(*Aeshna mixta*)

The last of our dragonflies to emerge with the first appearing late July but is most abundant from mid August to the end of September.

It is smaller than the other Aeshna hawkers and is now a common resident species whose numbers may be swelled by immigration. The males have blue spots on the dark abdomen. It can occur in quite large numbers and is a favourite food of the Hobby.

Emperor

(*Anax imperator*)

A large common species found at almost any large pond or lake from June to August where it can be seen patrolling. Easy to identify with the dorsal dark stripe on the abdomen which is bright blue in the male.

An aggressive predator taking even smaller dragonflies or butterflies.



Broad-bodied Chaser

(*Libellula depressa*)

A chunky dragonfly which is an early season species usually seen from May onwards. Like the other chasers it has dark wing-bases. This is a pioneer species often colonising new vegetated ponds frequently returning to the same perch. It is highly territorial.

Black-tailed Skimmer

(*Orthetrum cancellatum*)

A pioneer species which rests on the bare ground around lakes and other water bodies. It is highly territorial with frequent skirmishes with others of its species. Most common from mid May to August. This southern species has been advancing north over recent years, colonising southern Scotland.



Common Darter

(*Sympetrum striolatum*)

Common from mid summer onwards, it is usually the last species to remain on the wing with a few individuals making it into November most years.

The main confusion species is the less widespread Ruddy Darter which favours well vegetated ponds. The latter species has all black legs. All darters spend much time perched and are often seen basking. Resident populations are augmented by continental migrants in some years.

