

A Tale of Two Species

Odonata Survey, 15th June, 2020.

It's dry. And it's warm.

I was quite disappointed today though not, if I'm honest, surprised. There was very little activity - considering where we are in the season and the number of immature damselflies I saw last time: two weeks on this has not really translated into breeding adults.

This time I saw only two species: Azure damselflies (*Coenagrion puella*); Blue-tailed damselflies (*Ischnura elegans*).

School Pond was dry and devoid of odonata.

There was a tiny amount of water left in Friars' pond, but no odonata to be seen; the other 'wet' places in Big Meadow were too dry.

In the Hay Meadow things were slightly better; here I saw my first damselfly - a male Azure, hunting. But, in general, today was poor for damselflies away from water. It being warm, there were probably plenty of food insects near the ponds for the small numbers of damselflies about: not much competition so no need to forage further afield. I spotted a nice common spotted orchid whilst walking.

Cromwell's Pond had two male Azures and one male Blue-tailed.

Lucy's Pool had a little more action: seven male and two ovipositing pairs of Azures, plus two male Bluetailed.

Upper Sowerholme Pond had four male, one copulating pair and one ovipositing pair of Azures, plus two male blue-tailed damselflies.

Anna's Pool had twelve male, three copulating pairs, two ovipositing pairs and a single female (being mobbed!) Azures, plus two male Blue-tailed damselflies.

Willow Pond had two ovipositing pairs of Azure damselflies.

In the Arable Field, I saw a single male Blue-tailed damselfly, near to the (almost dry) pools.

And that, disappointingly, was that. I think the time has come for drastic measures: I feel that a rain dance is called for!

Pictures

Here are a few photographs, taken today, together with locations and descriptions. Larger examples are available!



Male Azure Damselfly cleaning his mouthparts, beside Anna's Pool.



Copulating pair of Azure damselflies, beside Anna's Pool.



Pair of Azure damselflies ovipositing, Anna's Pool.



Male Blue-tailed damselfly, basking near Upper Sowerholme Pond.