

# Four Odonata Species!

**Phil Hendry**

Odonata Survey, 1st July, 2020.

We've had some quite heavy rain for a few days, which brings the promise of more odonata. There was at least some water in each of the pools, and some of the boggy places were a lot boggier than last time. There were significantly more other insects (including, annoyingly, horseflies, which seemed not to be put off by my wearing insect repellent).

Today was cloudier and cooler than ideal, which probably accounts for the low numbers seen.

In the Big Meadow, there were small numbers of Azure damselflies (*Coenagrion Puella*), Blue-tailed damselflies (*Ischnura elegans*), one male Common Blue damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*), and a single male Common Darter dragonfly (*Sympetrum striolatum*). Friar's Pond had one male and one copulating pair of Azures; Alder Pond had a male Azure and a copulating pair of Blue-tailed; nothing at Ash Tree or Loxam's Ponds. The Common Blue damselfly was in the rushes near Friar's Pond. The Common Darter was flying between Friar's and Alder Ponds - unfortunately I was unable to photograph him.

In the Hay Meadow, I saw a couple of male Azures in the grass, and another flying Common Darter male - again, not stopping to pose for a photo! Cromwell's Pond is too overgrown with horse-tail ferns, and I saw nothing there. Lucy's Pool had a male Blue-tailed and two male Azure damselflies as well as an Azure pair ovipositing.

Upper Sowerholme Pond just had two male Azure damselflies.

Anna's pool had a number of Azure damselflies - four lone males, and three pairs ovipositing; there was also a pair of Blue-tailed damselflies copulating.

Willow Pond had an ovipositing pair of Azures, and two Blue-tailed damselflies: one a female of the colour form *rufescens obsoleta* (sorry about the poor photo!) ; the other a newly emerged teneral male amongst the rushes - they don't fly far on their first flight, so he'd clearly come out of Willow Pond. Therefore it's almost certain there have been Blue-tailed damselflies mating there.

Nothing to be seen in the Arable Field.

The Common Darter sightings were quite exciting - I just wish I'd been able to photograph them; July 1st is almost the earliest I've seen them around Lancaster. The season has been extending in recent years - the first ones appear earlier, by several weeks, than they did at the end of last century; the last, rather geriatric-looking examples can often now be seen at the end of October or beginning of November.

Though numbers overall were low, I think that was because of the less than ideal conditions - most were probably hiding in the vegetation. Last time those I saw were mostly clustered around the few wet places, whilst this time they were much more widespread, and there were quite a few away from the water.

Meadow Brown butterflies were out in abundance, and I saw an ichneumon fly in the Hay Meadow too - male *Ichneumon stramentor* I think.

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## Pictures

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

Mating pair of Blue-tailed damselflies near Friar's Pond



Male Common Blue damselfly near Friar's Pond



Meadow Brown butterflies mating in the Hay Meadow



Male Ichneumon Fly in the Hay Meadow



Female Blue-tailed damselfly, colour form *rufescens obsoleta* beside Willow Pond.

