

KEY TO DRAGONFLIES AT POTTERIC CARR NATURE RESERVE

This key can be used for dragonflies and damselflies at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve only; it should not be used at other sites where other species may occur. Bear in mind that teneral can look quite different.

The key starts with deciding whether what you are viewing is a damselfly or dragonfly.

- Large and robust-looking; never less than 30 mm long; eyes touching; strong flyers; often patrolling an area; wings always held at right angles to the body when at rest – **Go to DRAGONFLIES**
- Smaller and delicate; never more than 45 mm long; eyes separate; weak; fluttery flight; usually rest with wings over body – **Go to DAMSELFLIES**

DRAGONFLIES

Longer than 55 mm **Go to Hawkers**

Length between 45 mm

and 55 mm **Go to Skimmers and Chasers**

Length shorter than 40 mm **Go to Darters**

Hawkers

Length greater than 70 mm **Go to 1**

Length less than 65 mm **Go to 2**

1. Abdomen blue or green with black median line; prominent blue mark on segment 2; drooping end to abdomen in flight ➤ **Emperor Dragonfly**

Abdomen brown with indistinct yellow spots; wings suffused with amber ➤ **Brown Hawker**

Abdomen dark with green spots becoming blue towards tip in male, or yellowish-green (variable) in female; spots on last two segments joined, blue (male), yellowish (female); prominent shoulder stripes (antehumeral stripes); yellow triangle on segments 1 & 2; often seen hawking woodland rides; may approach observer ➤ **Southern Hawker**

Abdomen dark with blue (male) or yellow (female) spots; including last two segments where the spots are not joined; shoulder stripes absent or very faint

➤ **Common Hawker**

2. Abdomen dark with blue (male) or yellow (female) spots; yellow "golf tee" on segments 1 & 2; noticeable pale blue on underside of rear of thorax and segments 1 and 2 ➤ **Migrant Hawker**

Abdomen dark with blue (male) or yellow (female) spots; green antehumeral stripes in male; yellow and very short in female; on the wing in May and June mostly before other hawkers are on the wing

➤ **Hairy Dragonfly**

End of Hawkets

Skimmers and Chasers

Overall length about 55 mm:–

Abdomen powdery blue **Go to 3**

Abdomen brown or yellow **Go to 4**

Overall length about 45 mm:–

Abdomen blue; **Go to 5**

Abdomen brown or yellow **Go to 6**

3. Abdomen pale blue; slender with last three segments dark ➤ **Black-tailed Skimmer; male**

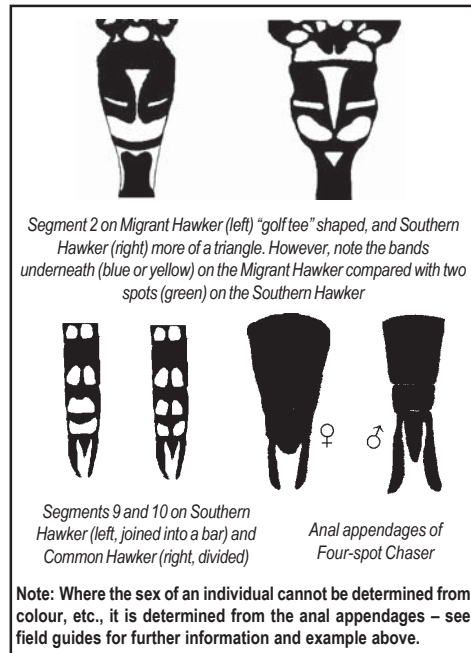
4. Abdomen yellow ochre; slender with prominent dark lines at side of each segment ➤ **Black-tailed Skimmer female or imm. male**

5. Abdomen blue with yellow spots along sides; short and fat ➤ **Broad-bodied Chaser; male**

6. Abdomen mid-brown with yellow spots along sides; short and fat ➤ **Broad-bodied Chaser female or imm. male**

Abdomen brown or golden brown; with a dark end; tapering; two dark spots at node (plus pterostigma); on leading edge of fore and hind wings; base of wings dark ➤ **Four-spotted Chaser**

End of Skimmers and Chasers



Key devised by John Hancox
Issue 2 © MMVII

Darters

Legs black with white or cream/yellow line along them

Pterostigma yellow with black border **Go to 7**

Pterostigma not as above **Go to 8**

Legs all black

Pterostigma black **Go to 9**

Pterostigma not as above **Go to 10**

7. Abdomen pale yellow; red veins in wing ➤ **Red-veined Darter, imm. male**

Abdomen red, not waisted; red veins in wing ➤ **Red-veined Darter, male**

Abdomen pale yellow, yellow veins in wing ➤ **Red-veined Darter; female**

8. Abdomen pale red/orange-red; only slightly waisted ➤ **Common Darter, male**

Abdomen yellow ochre; slightly waisted ➤ **Common Darter, immature male**

Abdomen pale brown or yellow ochre; turning olive with age ➤ **Common Darter, female**

9. Abdomen black; very short and waisted ➤ **Black Darter; male**

Abdomen yellow with black spots; very short and waisted ➤ **Black Darter; imm. male**

Abdomen pale brown or yellow; black triangle on thorax; ➤ **Black Darter; female**

10. Abdomen pillar box red; waisted ➤ **Ruddy Darter, male**

Abdomen yellow ochre; waisted ➤ **Ruddy Darter, immature male**

Abdomen yellow ochre with black line across each segment; plain thorax ➤ **Ruddy Darter, female**

End of Dragonflies

DAMSELFLIES

Longer than 40 mm **Go to 11**

Shorter than 40 mm **Go to 12**

11. Electric blue with dark bands across wings ➤ **Banded Demoiselle, male**

Metallic green with green or brownish-green wings sometimes glinting pinkish ➤ **Banded Demoiselle, female**

12. Abdomen red or red and black ➤ **Large Red Damselfly**

Abdomen metallic green; with a bronze sheen; with or without powdery blue markings on segments 2, 9 and 10; often rests with wings at 45° to body

➤ **Emerald Damselfly**

Abdomen mainly blue with some black markings **Go to 13**

Abdomen black with a blue "tail" **Go to 14**

Abdomen appearing mainly black with no blue "tail" **Go to 15**

13. Abdomen blue or pale blue with some black markings; black 'U' shaped mark on segment 2; segments 8 and 9 blue with some black on 9 ➤ **Azure Damselfly, male**

Abdomen blue or pale blue with some black markings; small black spot, with or without a stalk on segment 2; segments 8 and 9 all blue ➤ **Common Blue Damselfly, male**

14. Abdomen black with a noticeable blue 'tail'; thorax black with blue stripes and sides ➤ **Blue-tailed Damselfly, male**

As above but slightly thicker abdomen; thorax black with either blue, pinkish, pale violet or pale green thoracic stripes and side (various colour phases) ➤ **Blue-tailed Damselfly, female**

15. Abdomen black above with a thin green line at each segment; green underside; thistle head design (variable) on segment 2 (10% of population is a blue form where the green is replaced by blue) ➤ **Azure Damselfly, female**

Abdomen appears black – actually a blue, brown or greenish-blue abdomen with various torpedo-shaped black marks on segments 3 – 7 and a 'Christmas tree' shaped mark on segment 8 (see below) ➤ **Common Blue Damselfly, female**

This key has covered all the nineteen species regularly seen at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve. If you are still unable to identify the species from this key; please make a note of the description – you may have discovered a species new to the Reserve! – or you need to go through the procedure carefully again. In particular the females of darters and damselflies can be very confusing.

