

DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES





Resources

British Dragonfly Society website
(<https://british-dragonflies.org.uk>)



Dragonfly and Damselfly Identification Help

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[Dragonflies](#) » Identification Help

Dragonfly and Damselfly Identification Help

Have you spotted a Dragonfly or Damselfly and need help to identify it?
The following tips should help you to identify most species.

This page does not currently include most vagrant and migratory species. For these species visit our [species profile pages](#).

For a more comprehensive guide to Dragonfly identification please check out the range of fantastic Dragonfly guide books available via [our shop](#).

Is it a Dragonfly or a Damselfly?

Important ID features



Frons (face) markings and eye coloration

Side markings on the thorax.

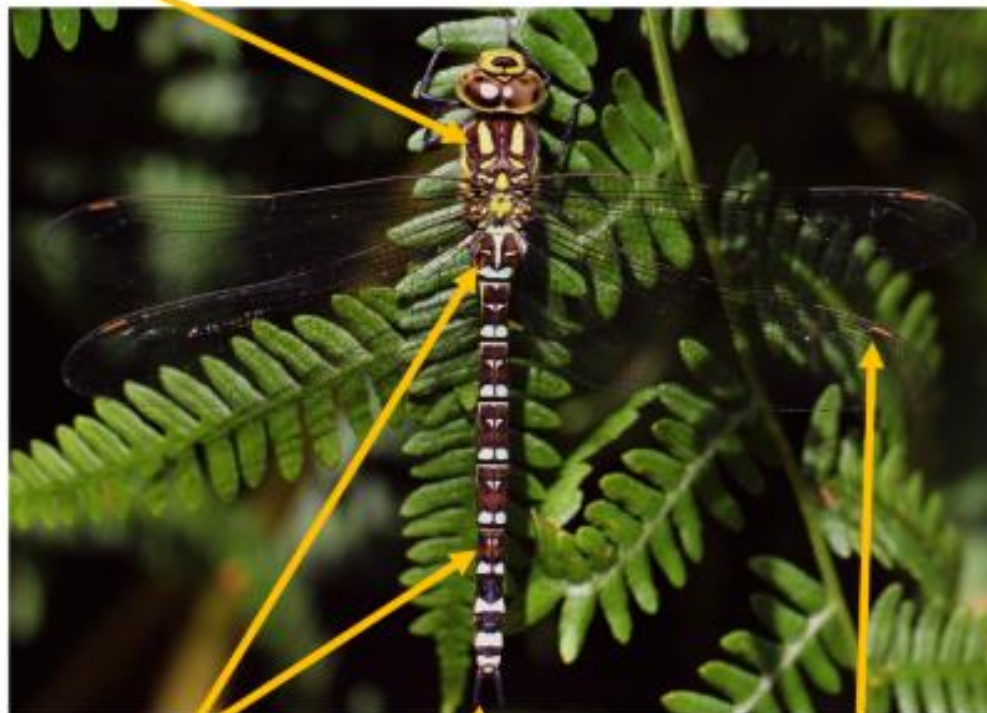
Leg coloration.

Side markings on the abdomen.

Anal appendages.

Important ID features

Antehumeral (thorax) markings



Abdomen markings

Anal appendages

Wing markings/
coloration

Dragonfly or Damselfly?



Feature	Dragonfly	Damselfly
ADULTS		
Body	Robust	Thin and delicate
Wing position at rest	Open	Closed*
Wing shape	Different between front and back	Same between front and back
Eye position	Touching at the top of the head*	Not touching at the top of the head
Flight	Strong and purposeful	Weak and fluttering
NYMPHS		
Rear appendages	Stiff, short and spiky (x 5)	Soft and flexible gills (x 3)
Body	Stout	Long and slender

*for most species



Photo: Tim Ransom



Photo: Tim Ransom

What sort of Dragonfly?

Hawkers and similar species:

Generally dark with bright spots or stripes.

Some mostly brown. Can be brightly coloured with a thick black mid-line stripe. Never with dark wing marks other than the wingspots (rectangular marks at the tip). Generally large, robust but thin bodied.

Darters and chasers:

Generally have a blue, red, yellow or brown body or a combination of some of these colours.

Sometimes with black markings. Some with additional dark marks on the wings. Generally smaller and stout bodied.

Emeralds:

Almost entirely emerald green coloured, usually metallic. Often bright green eyes. Sometimes with bronze tints.



Dragonflies and damselflies – a recap of features to look out for:

- Body shape and wing position
 - Colour of face and eyes
 - Colour and shape of markings on thorax
 - Colour and shape of markings on abdomen
 - Wing spots
-
- Leg colour
 - Anal appendages



Golden-ringed
dragonfly

What species?

Compare your notes and photos against a guidebook or using the resources at <https://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk>.



Species to look out for:

Beautiful demoiselle
(*Calopteryx virgo*)



Southern emerald damselfly
(*Lestes barbarus*)



Field Guide to the
**Dragonflies and
Damselflies**
of Great Britain and Ireland



Steve Brooks
Illustrated by Richard Lewington

revised
edition

All the resident and migrant species fully described and
illustrated with more than 280 colour illustrations

**Field Guide to the
larvae and exuviae of
British Dragonflies**

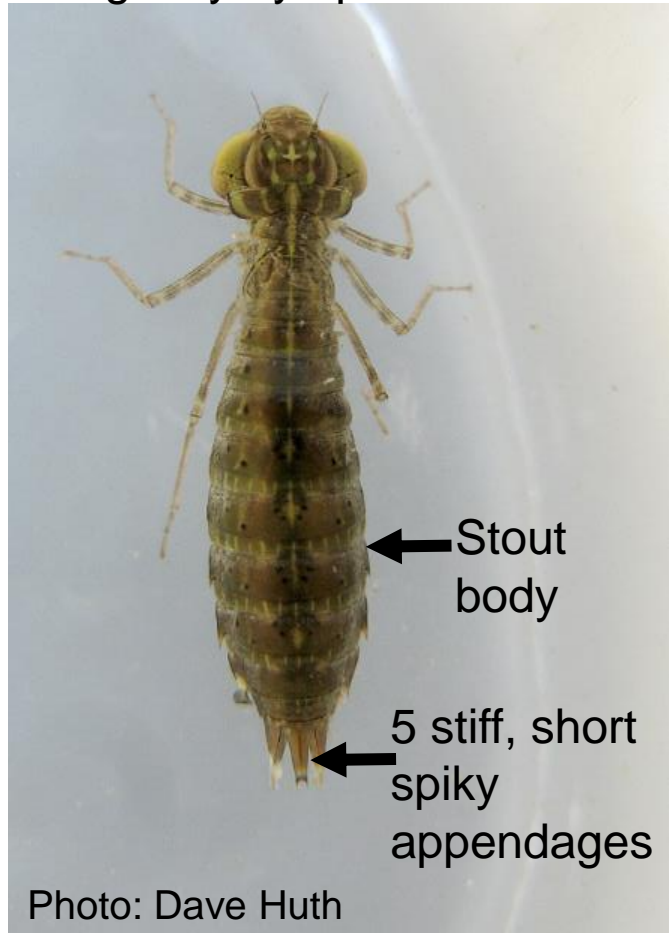
Damselflies (Zygoptera) and Dragonflies (Anisoptera)



Steve Cham

Nymphs / Larvae

Dragonfly nymph



Damselfly nymph



OTHER INVERTEBRATES





Greater water boatman (or backswimmer)



Whirligig beetles



Stoneflies





Diving beetle larva



Great diving beetle



Thanks for listening!

