

# Emperors

## Phil Hendry

Odonata Survey, 11th July, 2021. 8/10 Cloud; 20°C; Wind Force 1-2, direction seemed variable.

Finding time to do a survey has been a struggle; that, together with finding a suitable day (warm, sunny and with only a light breeze) has conspired to mean that it's almost month since the last survey. If the conditions aren't good, there isn't much point surveying because, although there may be odonata present, they're probably in hiding.

Sunday 11th July was the 'best' day for a couple of weeks. It was cloudy, though warm, so not ideal - and hopefully the numbers seen are a reflection of that, rather than any real scarcity.

On Cromwell's Pond the first thing I saw was a male Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*). His blue was a little dull, because it wasn't really warm - they become much bluer once the temperature is into the mid 20s. There were also an ovipositing pair of Azure damselflies (*Coenagrion puella*), and two single males. After a few minutes, a male Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*) arrived, and proceeded to play 'chicken' with the emperor - zooming close and then dodging when the emperor tried to make an attack. There was also a single male Blue-tailed damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*), weaving about in the horsetail ferns, hoping not to be noticed by the dragonflies, for whom he would have made a decent meal.

Lucy's pool was very quiet - just two Azure damselflies.

Walking through Upper Sowerholme was a bit of a trial - it seemed very wet, and the reed and nettles pretty tenacious, to say nothing of the horseflies (for whom I seemed to be a tasty snack - apparently they weren't put off at all by the insect repellent I was wearing). I saw, briefly, a Brown Hawker dragonfly (*Aeshna grandis*), and that was all.

Anna's Pool was much quieter than usual, with just a couple of male Azure Damselflies.

Willow Pond was playing host to a male Emperor Dragonfly - assuming it wasn't the one I'd seen earlier by Cromwell's Pond.

There was a male Broad-bodied Chaser patrolling the two northernmost ponds in Flora Field. That definitely wasn't the same as the one on Cromwell's Pond - it was marked a bit differently.

I didn't manage to take any photos - I couldn't get close enough to any of them.