



Club-Tailed Dragonfly

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

CLUB-TAILED DRAGONFLY (GOMPHUS VULGATISSIMUS)



Ecology

Appearance

The club-tailed dragonfly is a medium-sized yellow/green and black dragonfly with a noticeably club-shaped tail.

Habitat

Club tailed dragonflies prefer medium to large, slow moving rivers with silty beds. They are also found in other water bodies such as meres and pools.

Food

The larvae eat other insect larvae, water fleas, snails, tadpoles and small fish. Adult club tailed dragonflies eat smaller flying insects. They catch and eat the insects in flight by scooping the insect into their specially shaped legs.

Life Style

- * They spend around 3-5 years in the larval stage then they emerge from the river and shed their cases to become adults. This stage usually occurs between late May and early June.
- * After emerging the adults fly to nearby woodland and the males begin a courtship display to attract



Club-Tailed Dragonfly

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

females.

* Adult males return to the river after about a week where they fight other males for the best areas of river and find females to breed with.

Predators

Adult club tailed dragonflies are predated by hobby falcons whereas the larvae are predated by frogs.

Current status

This dragonfly is described as nationally scarce, it is extremely local but can occur in large populations when the habitat is suitable. Strong populations are known to exist on the rivers Severn, Wye and Thames. In Cheshire club-tailed dragonfly occurs on the stretch of the River Dee between Shocklach and Aldford. The short flight period of the dragonfly restricts surveying opportunities to the last week in May and first two weeks in June. The River Gow, which flows within 5km of the Dee, could possibly provide further suitable breeding habitat for the dragonfly, although regular dredging of the river channel may pose problems.

The club-tailed dragonfly is a medium-sized yellow/green and black dragonfly with a noticeably club-shaped tail. It favours slow flowing rivers with silt deposits for the larvae and adjacent tree cover for the adults. The larvae may take up to five years to mature with emergence occurring in late May early June.

Threats

- * Water pollution
- * Disturbance of bank sides during the emergence season
- * Flood prevention measures
- * Loss of suitable emergence sites

How are we helping to conserve the Club-tailed Dragonfly in the Cheshire region?

- * Records collated by the county recorder
- * Members of the British Dragonfly Society (and others) have recorded the species at it's established site since it was discovered in 1985.
- * In May 2002 volunteers carried out an extensive survey of both banks of the River Dee between Bangor on Dee and Aldford. Adults and exuvia were observed in smaller numbers than in previous



years but the up and downstream limits of the occupied area were confirmed.

* In 2002 Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and English Nature (EN) have put forward the entire length of the River Dee as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with club tailed dragonfly as a listed feature. In addition the river is also being proposed as a candidate Special Area of Conservation.

Objectives, targets and actions

The objectives, targets and actions to help conserve the club-tailed dragonfly in the Cheshire region can be found on the [Biodiversity Action Reporting System \(BARS\)](#) along with full details of our progress so far.

How to find out more about the Club-Tailed Dragonfly

Cheshire Dragonflies and Damselflies website - <http://www.brocross.com/dfly/dfly.htm>

British Dragonfly Society - www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

Contact details

LBAP Chair

References and Glossary

HMSO (1995): Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, Volume 2: Action Plans, London.

HMSO (1995): Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, Volume 1: Meeting the Rio Challenge, London. <http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/files/uploaded/club%20tailed.pdf>

