



Original artwork by  
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## Barton & Barrow Claypits Dragonflies

You can see damselflies and dragonflies flying near the claypits on sunny days from May to October. Most adults live for less than a month, but their aquatic larval stage can last several years. Adults prey on flying insects; their larvae feed on small aquatic animals. Compared to dragonflies, damselflies are smaller, more delicate and weaker fliers. Most damselflies hold wings close to their body when resting. Emerald damselflies and all dragonflies rest with wings spread out.

### **Blue-tailed damselfly**

Mature males have blue eyes and a blue and black thorax. They have a thin blackish abdomen (25 mm long) with a blue patch just before the tip. Other blue damselfly species do not show this combination of features. Mature females have various colours. Often the blue-tailed damselfly is found close to bankside vegetation and can be active in dull weather. You can see them from May to September.

### **Emperor dragonfly**

Emperor dragonflies are large and mature males have a green thorax and a blue abdomen (55 mm long). Adult females can have a green abdomen. Males and females have a long black stripe on top of the abdomen, distinguishing them from other large dragonflies. Male emperor dragonflies constantly patrol several metres above the water. They occasionally rest by hanging from vegetation, and you can see them between May and September.

### **Four-spotted chaser**

The four-spotted chaser is a medium-sized dragonfly. Adults have a brown thorax and brown tapering abdomen (30 mm long). There are two dark spots on each wing making four spots per pair of wings. At the base of each hind wing is a dark patch. Mature males repeatedly return to their perches on vegetation, sometimes following aerial 'dog-fights' with other males. You can see them from May to August.

### **Common darter**

The common darter is a small dragonfly. Mature males have a narrow orange-red abdomen (28 mm long). They are somewhat similar to the ruddy darter, but this has a blood-red, club-shaped abdomen. Mature females have a yellowish-brown abdomen. The common darter frequently perches on vegetation or the ground. You can see them from June to October and sometimes, in a smaller number, in early November.

Like to know more? Visit [www.british-dragonflies.org.uk](http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk)

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