

# Dragonflies, May 2018.

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Bar a small number of Siberian Winter Damselflies a few weeks earlier, my 2018 season for Odonata really kicked off in May with very good numbers of both dragonflies and damselflies flying from the very first day of the month.

With sun and high temperatures throughout, numbers of both dragonflies and damselflies were impressive across the whole month - massive flights of Downy Emeralds, Northern White-faced Darters and Northern Damselflies in the first days, soon followed by Common Clubtails, Four-spotted Chasers and assorted damselflies, including Red-eyed Damselflies and Large Red Damselflies.

As the month progressed, increasing diversity was noted and by the third week, a good couple of dozen species were on the wing, including assorted damselflies, darters, chasers, skimmers and hawkers, amongst the most dramatic being Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Blue Emperor and Lessor Emperor.

## SPECIES LIST

In total, 27 species were identified in May:

Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* Flying from 16 May, rapidly became common along major rivers and larger pools, especially along the River Sventoji near Ukmerge and the River Neris near Druskininkai. Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo* Only ones seen in May were about 30 along a wooded stream near Rokiskes on 26 May. Common Bluetail *Ischnura elegans* Six at one locality near Druskininkai on 19 May, perhaps others overlooked. Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* Several at Druskininkai on 19 May and at Zuvintas on the 20th, thereafter becoming common from the 25th, including at Ropejos and Ukmerge. Variable Damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum* Several noted

near Druskininkai on 19 May, perhaps others overlooked. Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* At least 20 at Ukmerge on 16 May, thereafter common at many localities from the 18th, including near Druskininkai, Labanoras and at Zuvintas. Northern Damselfly *Coenagrion hastulatum* Flying from the first days of the month, an estimated 80 were noted at Labanoras on the 1st, even more by the 5th. Thereafter, quite common into the second half of the month, including at the Ropejos meadows, around Vilnius, near Druskininkai, at Zuvintas and along the Sventoji River at Ukmerge. Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas* Flying from 13 May, this was a fairly localised species. In total, I saw up to five at Labanoras, at least 25 in wet grassland along the Nemunas at Druskininkai and eight at Zuvintas. Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula* Eighteen seen at a wetland near Vilnius on the 15th, one near Rokiskes on the 26th. White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* Common along the River Neris near Druskininkai from 19 May, thereafter several at Ukmerge on the 27th. Norfolk Hawker *Aeshna isocetes* A total of five seen, all during the second half of the month - one at Ukmerge on the 16th, one near Druskininkai on the 19th, one at Zuvintas on the 20th, one near Rokiskes on the 25th and another near Ukmerge on the 27th. Blue Emperor *Anax imperator* At least 15 on a pool near Ukmerge on the 27th and a single at Labanoras on the 31st. Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* About 12 on a pool near Ukmerge on the 27th. Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense*

Recorded at two localities - one in the Ropejos meadows on the 6th, six at Zuvintas on the 20th.

Common Clubtail *Gomphus vulgatissimus* Already in good numbers in the Druskininkai area on the 6 May, thereafter becoming common at almost all localities throughout much of the month, especially at Labanoras and Ukmerge. Golden-ringed Dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii* One in meadows south of Vilnius on 26-31 May. Downy Emerald *Cordulia aenea* Abundant in the first half of the month, with some hundreds along woodland edge at Labanoras on 1-5 May and similar numbers in the Druskininkai area in the following days. Less abundant in the second half of the month, numbers dwindling to single figures at most sites by the month's end. Yellow-Spotted Emerald *Somatochlora flavomaculata* One near Druskininkai on the 19th, one near Ukmerge on the 27th. Two-spotted Dragonfly *Epiheca bimaculata* Two very mobile individuals noted near Druskininkai on 19 May. Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* A scatter of records across the month, including several at Druskininkai on the 6th, two near Vilnius on the 15th, at least 30 at Zuvintas on the 20th, five in Rudnikai on the 25th and eight near Rokiskes on the 26th. Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* Several records from the middle of the month onwards, including three at Labanoras on the 13th, one near Vilnius the 15th, eight near Ukmerge on the 16th and four near Ukmerge on the 27th. Scarce Chaser *Libellula fulva* Generally less common than the previous two species - logged individuals included four at Labanoras on the 18th, three at Zuvintas on the 20th, five near Rokiskes on the 26th and three at Labanoras on 31st. Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* First individuals seen at Labanoras on the 13th, thereafter becoming abundant in the second half of the month, especially at Labanoras, Ukmerge, Ropejos and the Druskininkai area. Large White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia pectoralis*

One near Rokiskes on the 26th, at least two at Ropejos on 31st. More seen from the beginning of June.

Small White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia dubia* At least 30 recorded on Sphagnum bog at Rudninkai on 25 May. Northern White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia rubicunda* Abundant at the beginning of the month in particular - several hundred emerging at Labanoras between 1-5 May, also becoming common at Druskininkai on the 6th. Widespread thereafter, though less common at other localities and numbers much reduced by the third week of the month. Eastern White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia albifrons*

Three at Labanoras on 16 May, five at Zuvintas on the 20th.