The Islay Natural History Trust's Checklist of the Butterflies and Dragonflies of Islay

Islay is a little too far west and north for some butterflies and dragonflies, but thanks to the variety of its habitats, the species totals are quite respectable. This list gives brief status details for the species which have been reliably recorded in the last 20 years or so, plus some other possibles. Our knowledge of several of them is incomplete and more records are needed. Please use the attached recording form to let us have your observations.

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**BUTTERFLIES**

**Dingy Skipper** *Erynnis tages*
A 1960s record in north-west Islay is the only possible sighting.

**Clouded Yellow** *Colias croceus*
This migrant has reached Islay in major invasion years, e.g. 1947 and again more recently in 1992 and 2000.

**Large White** *Pieris brassicae*
Most records come from the Rinns and around Port Ellen and Port Askaig. Migrants arrive in some years.

**Small White** *Pieris rapae*
Not as common as the Large White but liable to turn up anywhere.

**Green-veined White** *Pieris napi*
Common and widespread, May to August.

**Orange Tip** *Anthocharis cardamines*
Recorded on two occasions during the 1970s, then not until the late 1990s, when there were two more records.

**Green Hairstreak** *Callophrys rubi*
Regular on the Rinns, sometimes in large numbers on the moorland; fewer reports from elsewhere.

**Small Copper** *Lycaena phlaeas*
Recorded from the Rinns and south-east Islay; status elsewhere uncertain.

**Common Blue** *Polyommatus icarus*
Widespread in lowland areas, especially on the limestone and dunes. The only 'Blue' on Islay.

**Red Admiral** *Vanessa atlanta*
Summer migrant in small numbers, usually appearing May, occasionally April, through to September.

**Painted Lady** *Cynthia cardui*
Summer migrant, less common that Red Admiral, with no records in some years.

**Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae*
Widespread and common.

**Wall Brown** *Lasiommata megera*
Two 1970s records, from the Rinns and from the Port Askaig area.

**Grayling** *Hipparchia semele*
Widely distributed in the south and west; status elsewhere uncertain.

**Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina*
Common and widespread.

**Small Heath** *Coenonympha pamphilus*
Common and widespread.

**Large Heath** *Coenonympha tullia*
Locally common on the Rinns and in a few places in the east.
Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*
Recorded from much of the west and south of the island, as well as near Ballygrant; locally common.

In addition to the above, there are single pre-1975 records of **Silver-studded Blue** *Plebejus argus* and **Northern Brown Argus** *Aricia artaxerxes* from Port Ellen, but the former is now probably extinct in Scotland, while the latter occurs no nearer than Ayrshire. There is also a 1941 record of **High Brown Fritillary** *Argynnis adippe*, but its origins are considered doubtful.

Other species worth looking out for include: **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes venata*, **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni* and **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** *Boloria euphrosyne*, all of which have been recorded from Mull; and **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** *Boloria selene*, which is regularly recorded on Jura.

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**DRAGONFLIES**

**Common Hawker** *Aeshna juncea*
Mainly found on the Rinnss and in woodlands at Ballygrant, Bridgend, and in the south and east.

**Golden-ringed Dragonfly** *Cordulegaster boltonii*
Widespread and quite common in open habitats as well as woodland.

**Keeled Skimmer** *Orthetrum coerulescens*
Two record from north-west Islay; in 1971 and 1992, the latter a mating pair.

**Four-spot Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata*
Recorded from the Rinnss and from parts of the south and east.

**Black Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum*
Most records come from the Rinnss, but probably occurs widely elsewhere.

**Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum*
Probably occurs quite widely, but difficult to separate from Highland Darter.

**Highland Darter** *Sympetrum nigrescens*
Widespread and locally common.

**Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo*
Found in a few localities, mainly on burns running off the limestone.

**Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes sponsa*
Widespread and locally common; few records from the south-west or the north-east.

**Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*
Well distributed on the Rinnss but few records from the south or east.

**Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura elegans*
Widespread and quite common.

**Common Blue Damselfly** *Enallagma cyathigerum*
Widespread and quite common, but perhaps less than than Blue-tailed Damselfly.

Found on Jura, but not so far on Islay, is the **Azure Damselfly** *Coenagrion puella*. Other species worth looking out for are the **Azure Hawker** *Aeshna caerulea*, the **Hairy Dragonfly** *Bracytron pratense*, the **Scarce Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes dryas*, the **Irish Damselfly** *Coenagrion lunulatum* and the **Variable Damselfly** *C.pulchellum*.

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Issued by: Islay Natural History Trust, Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay, PA48 7TX.
April 2003
Please return this form to:
Islay Natural History Trust
Islay Natural History Trust
Port Charlotte
Isle of Islay
PA48 7TX
Tel: 01496-850288
E-mail: inht@islaynaturalhistory.org
www.islaynaturalhistory.org

BUTTERFLY AND DRAGONFLY RECORDING FORM

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OBSERVER .................................................................................................................................................................................................

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The Islay Natural History Trust Visitor Centre in Port Charlotte is open to visitors from May to September. Come and look at our displays, exhibitions, aquaria, information, reference books and slide shows on all aspects of Islay’s wildlife. Children’s corner, quiz sheets, something for all the family.