

Common Darter

Sympetrum striolatum

Insects · On the wing Jun–Nov



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A small to medium dragonfly. Mature males are orange-red with a narrow abdomen; females and immatures are ochre-yellow. Common darters are among the most numerous dragonflies around Dumfries at ponds, lochs, canals and ditches, and have the longest flight season of any British dragonfly — often still on the wing well into November in a mild autumn.

BEHAVIOUR

Darters hunt from a perch rather than patrolling: they sit on a warm stone, post or path, dart out to seize a passing insect, and return to the same spot, which makes them one of the easiest dragonflies to watch and photograph. On cool autumn days they bask on sun-warmed surfaces to raise body temperature. Eggs are dropped into water in flight, the pair dipping in tandem.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Skimmers and darters (Libellulidae)
SIZE	Body 37–43 mm
STATUS	Native; abundant and widespread

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