

Emperor Dragonfly

Anax imperator

Insects · On the wing Jun–Aug



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A very large dragonfly with an apple-green thorax and a long abdomen — sky-blue in males, green in females — carrying a black line down the middle. Emperors have spread north rapidly with warming summers and now reach southern Scotland, favouring large, well-vegetated ponds, lochs and canals. Seeing one around Dumfries is a recent development.

BEHAVIOUR

The emperor patrols a large territory high over open water almost continuously, rarely settling, and drives off other dragonflies. It catches and eats prey on the wing, including butterflies and other dragonflies, holding the catch in its legs while flying. Females lay alone, perching on floating vegetation and inserting eggs into plant tissue below the waterline.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Hawkers (Aeshnidae)
SIZE	Body 66–84 mm · our bulkiest dragonfly
STATUS	Native; expanding north rapidly with warmer summers

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