

Great Diving Beetle

Dytiscus marginalis

Insects · Active all year · flies between ponds at night



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A large, streamlined, dark olive-brown water beetle with a distinct golden-yellow margin around the thorax and wing cases. Males have smooth, glossy wing cases and suction pads on their front legs; females' are usually grooved. Great diving beetles live in well-vegetated ponds, ditches and lochans around Dumfries and are among the largest invertebrate predators in fresh water here.

BEHAVIOUR

It surfaces tail-first to renew a bubble of air held under the wing cases, which works as both an air supply and a physical gill. Adults and the fierce, long-jawed larvae — 'water tigers' — take tadpoles, insect larvae, newts and even small fish. Adults fly strongly at night between waters, navigating by reflected light, which is how new garden ponds are colonised so quickly.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Predaceous diving beetles (Dytiscidae)
SIZE	27–35 mm
STATUS	Native; widespread in well-vegetated still water

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