

21st June Summer Solstice - Lower Tamar Lake to Cape Horn

At 10 o'clock in the morning, the temperature was 26°C on a bright but hazy, dry and calm day. It was hot, but we reasoned that a lot of the proposed walk was well shaded by trees.

The aqueduct bed, although damp mud, was obviously drying out quite quickly. All plants along the route were almost head height, verdant and lush. It was not really a day for birds except on Lower Tamar Lake where there were many water birds and along the walk, the plaintive but demanding cheep cheep of fledging birds was often heard.

The main attraction at the lake was on the bridge over the slipway where we watched three species of dragonfly mating and ovipositing – Common Blue Damsel, Common Darter and Emperor Dragonflies.

Where the shade ran out, the air was filled with insects of all sorts; hoverflies, true flies, bees, butterflies and beetles. Being ectotherms, they were moving about so fast in the heat that identification, let alone photography, was challenging.

The most common species were butterflies – especially Meadow Brown and Ringlets which were abundant all along the walk, but supported by the occasional Large Skipper, Speckled Wood and Red Admiral. Before we arrived at Virworthy Wharf, we were rewarded by both Banded and Beautiful Demoiselles as well as a Blue-tailed Damsel. We also disturbed a few moths – Snout, Clouded Border and Barred Straw.

At the Wharf itself, the open water was welcome adding 5-spot Burnet moth, Common Blue Damsel, Common Darter and a Large Red Damsel as well as freshwater invertebrates such as Pond Skaters, Whirligig beetles and Water Boatmen to the list.

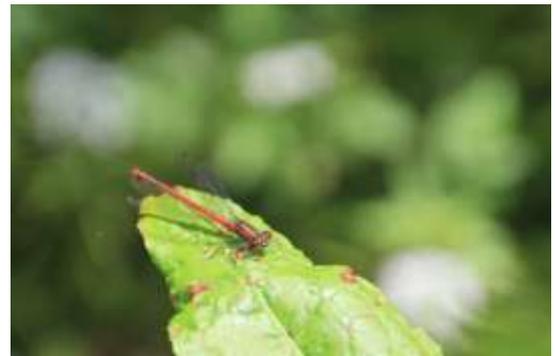
Although from Cape Horn onwards there is shade, the open patches are more frequent so we decided not to



Meadow Brown



Common Blue Damsel



Large Red Damsel



Clouded Border (moth)

risk heat stroke and returned earlier than planned. Our final sighting was of two black and orange beetles – the Spotted Longhorn *Rutpela maculata*.

Later, we cooled down at Tamar Lake café with an ice cream. At midday the temperature had reached 30°C – a wise decision to stop and to have the ice cream we thought.



Beautiful Demoiselle