

Black Darter

Sympetrum danae

Insects · On the wing Jul–Oct



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A small dragonfly. Mature males turn almost entirely matt black with a few yellow flecks; females and immatures are yellow and black with a distinctive black triangle on top of the thorax. Black darters are birds of the bog — they need acidic, peaty pools, mires and moorland lochans, which makes the peatlands of Dumfries and Galloway good ground for them.

BEHAVIOUR

Like other darters it hunts from a low perch, often on bare peat, sphagnum or heather, returning repeatedly to the same spot. It is strongly tied to acid water with abundant sphagnum moss, so it is a useful indicator that a bog is in reasonable condition. Larvae develop in a single year in shallow, warm, peaty pools that dry out too often for larger species.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Skimmers and darters (Libellulidae)
SIZE	Body 29-34 mm · Britain's smallest dragonfly
STATUS	Native; a peatland specialist, commonest in Scotland

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