



AZURE DAMSELFLIES IN A 'MATING LOOP' AT THE RESERVE

# Monkton Nature Reserve Newsletter



August 2020

## Monkton Nature SHED project by John Way

Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed and supported us so far. The Monkton Nature SHED (MNS) project, which has been operating for 18 months, comes under the umbrella of the Thanet Countryside Trust, who have very kindly helped us in so many ways.

When joining the reserve you will be offered membership of the SHED project. Everyone is encouraged to be a member of the reserve first though, before enjoying the facilities of the SHED project and, importantly, the reserve itself.

Men's SHEDs first started in Australia and, since their introduction to the UK, has spread many areas. As MNS, we are also members of the National Association.

MNS offers a space where retired men and women can actively pursue wellbeing and respond to disruption to their lives, enabling men and women to reduce their risk of isolation.

Older men without partners are more socially isolated and one of the main objectives of the SHED project is to encourage all older people to be more socially active through hands-on DIY activities. We aim to improve

physical, emotional and spiritual health & general wellbeing.

We have a large metal container providing secure storage for wood and some tools. We have recently had power and light installed and there is limited space in which to carry out small DIY jobs. We now have sufficient funding to provide an additional large wooden workshop which will be installed adjacently to the container and will provide further much needed facilities in which we also hope to incorporate a 'repair shop' similar to the one now seen on TV. This will be built in the coming weeks.

Monkton Nature SHED project is currently under lock down. In the meantime interested parties are invited to contact John Way, of Monkton Nature Reserve, or Les Shonk, both trustees of Thanet Countryside Trust.

**NEWS FLASH: As well as this Newsletter, something else to keep you 'in touch' with nature and our work at the Reserve during closure. Firstly, our thanks go to Nik Mitchell who has produced a short film of nature 'taking over' at Monkton, and used his drone to capture some wonderful 'bird's eye' footage!**

<https://monkton-reserve.org/>

**Michael Maloney of Countrywide Productions has produced a series of Natural History films intended to introduce children to the fascination of the Natural World. Two of these, "How do birds feed?" and "Life in a Pond" contain images shot at Monkton**

<https://vimeo.com/user/59176548/folder/2138742>

## Nature notes – aerial predators

by Caroline Marais

Dragonflies are stunning and amazing insects; the largest known insect of all time was a predator resembling a dragonfly but was only distantly related to them. Its name is Meganeuropsis, and it ruled the skies before pterosaurs, birds and bats had even evolved.

There are 47 species of Dragonfly breeding in Great Britain and Ireland. Six of those species are Darters; one that frequents the **Monkton Nature Reserve** ponds is *Sympetrum sanguineum* or the 'Ruddy Darter', a name that causes children to listen! The Ruddy Darter takes its name from its colour and its swift flight behaviour.

When observing life around the pond, children invariably like to know the difference between dragonfly and damselfly and one key observable feature is:

Damselfly – wings usually held together over back when resting,

Dragonfly – wings held at right angles to the body when resting



Ruddy Darter

### WHEN TO SEE DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES AT MONKTON

Dragonflies and damselflies are on the wing at the reserve from April to October. We have recorded 17 species at Monkton, including the rare Willow Emerald damselfly

The Turtle Dove is of global conservation concern – it has declined by 93% in the UK since 1994. A pair has bred at Monkton Nature Reserve regularly over the past few years.

These birds are migratory, arriving in the UK in late April to breed and returning to Africa in the autumn. Unfortunately, they are hunted on their migration route and this has reduced their numbers, together with altered climate-related conditions in their African wintering grounds. However, the main cause of their decline has been changing farming methods in breeding areas that have led to loss of food (mainly wildflower seeds) and nesting sites (old established hedgerows). At Monkton, where they nest in the thick scrub of the lower reserve, we use a wildflower seed mix to supplement their food as part of a nationwide conservation project run by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

## Turtle Doves by Clive Nuttman



Turtle Dove by Annie Begley

HELP THE TURTLE DOVE BY VOLUNTEERING AT MONKTON

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT: [volunteering@monkton-reserve.org](mailto:volunteering@monkton-reserve.org)

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