

They seek him here, they seek him there ...

While not necessarily a he and not the Scarlet Pimpernel that is alluded to in the title, it was an equally rare and elusive creature which was found by Dr. Nick Everall of Aquascience Consultancy Limited while working for Natural England in a Derbyshire river catchment in the spring of 2014. Dr. Everall found a mayfly nymph of the Scarce Purple Dun (*Paraleptophlebia weneri*) at an undisclosed site in a Natural England Nature Reserve in the White Peak Area of The Peak District National Park in April 2014. A voucher specimen was sent to the National Mayfly Recorder, Craig Macadam and he concurred that this was the Scarce Purple Dun. A photograph of an adult female sub-imago of the Scarce Purple Dun (*Paraleptophlebia weneri*) is shown in the photograph below.



Adult female Scarce Purple Dun (*Paraleptophlebia weneri*)

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Hitherto, the Scarce Purple Dun only had peer confirmed records from calcareous streams in Hampshire and Wiltshire, with many from well vegetated winterbournes like the upper Bourne Rivulet in Hampshire shown in the photograph overleaf where Dr. Everall has historically found this mayfly.



Upper Bourne Rivulet in Hampshire

© Dr. Nick Everall, 2009

For the time being Natural England wish to keep the site details for this recent Derbyshire find of the Scarce Purple Dun confidential in order to protect this geographically rare insect. Suffice to say that the Peak District watercourse where it was found mimicked much of the known southern habitat for this mayfly, being calcareous, well vegetated and drying up for much of the summer months. The latter watercourse process of seasonal desiccation has been documented to be important for egg development in this mayfly species.

Very few Scarce Purple Duns were apparent in the Derbyshire watercourse surveyed in 2014 but historic studies in southern chalk streams suggested that this species can occur at a very low density (Kite, 1962). Pending funding, a wider but bespoke expert survey of the surrounding river catchments in the White Peak Area of The Peak District National Park has been proposed to target similar stream habitats in order to determine both the current and new northern geographic range of this mayfly.

Anyone wishing to assist in the funding and geographic extension of this survey work can contact either Dr. Nick Everall email: rnaquaconsult@aol.com or ☎ 01246 239344 or Marion Andrews at Natural England email: Marion.Andrews@naturalengland.org.uk ☎ 01629 640006.