The white-faced darter is nationally scarce in Britain. It is primarily a northern species, the most numerous of the European Leucorrhinia species, and occurs in suitable habitat everywhere north of fifty degrees latitude. In southern Europe it tends to be found in mountain environments.

White-faced darters are small dragonflies that inhabit acidic pools on bogs and heaths. To complete their life-cycle they need: semi-submerged Sphagnum moss or other similar aquatic substrate for larval development; open heathland and woodland near breeding pools for maturation and roosting; and emergent vegetation, preferably cottongrass, for completion of metamorphosis.

1.1 Objectives
A. Protect and maintain the existing colony and range of the white-faced darter dragonfly, ensuring no loss or fragmentation.
B. Increase the number of individuals at Fenn’s, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SSSI and elsewhere by enhancing additional areas of suitable habitat.
C. Establish and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the distribution, status and ecological requirements of the white-faced darter through research, survey and monitoring.
D. Promote communication, education and awareness of the status and needs of the white-faced darter.

1.2 Targets
• Establish one further colony of white-faced darters by 2010
• Maintain population size.
• Carry out five targeted surveys of potentially suitable habitats in order to seek additional populations by 2010.
• Expand species range within Fenn’s & Whixall Mosses SSSI by 2010
Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan

2 Current Status

2.1 Importance
The population at Fenn’s, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SSSI is one of the most southerly in the British Isles. There is a considerable gap between this colony and the next site in Cheshire. The Shropshire colony is of national importance.

2.2 Trends
Historically the white-faced darter probably occurred at other Shropshire sites until its specialised habit was destroyed by drainage, peat extraction and afforestation. The rehabilitation of the peat cuttings at Fenn’s Moss have led to a recent dramatic increase in the population, and with this work continuing the population could expand further within this site and possibly to others.

2.3 Population and Distribution
The population is centred on Fenn’s, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SSSI. The species survived in peat cuttings and recently spread to additional areas within the site after rehabilitation works restored suitable hydrological conditions. The white-faced darter is common in the SSSI but as yet there is no estimation of population size.

3 Current Factors Affecting the Species
- Loss of open water through natural succession. The white-faced darter needs a balance between open water and sphagnum bog.
- Pollution or deterioration of water quality in the pools.
- Increase of suitable conditions at Fenn’s Moss due to restoration works is assisting the expansion of the population.
- Lack of additional suitable sites to colonise.

4 Current Action

4.1 Policy and Protection
- The habitats of Fenn’s, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses are protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

4.2 Management, Research and Survey
- Habitat management at Fenn’s Moss by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales to increase the population is on-going.
- The population is monitored annually by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales.

5 Key Habitats
- Peat bogs

6 Complementary Plans
Shropshire Peat Bogs HAP
## 5. Proposed Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat / Species</th>
<th>Action code</th>
<th>Action text</th>
<th>Location of action</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>End date</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Assisting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-faced Darter</td>
<td>SHR WFD HS 03</td>
<td>Ensure that Fenn's &amp; Whixall Mosses SSSI is appropriately managed to support the White-faced Darter</td>
<td>Fenn's &amp; Whixall Mosses SSSI, Shropshire</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SWT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-faced Darter</td>
<td>SHR WFD HC 01</td>
<td>Identify suitable areas that could be specifically managed to attract the White-faced Darter</td>
<td>Fenn's &amp; Whixall Mosses SSSI, Shropshire</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>SWT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-faced Darter</td>
<td>SHR WFD SU 01</td>
<td>Continue to record transect data annually over known existing population(s) to monitor changes in population size.</td>
<td>Fenn's &amp; Whixall Mosses SSSI, Shropshire</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>SWT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-faced Darter</td>
<td>SHR WFD SU 02</td>
<td>Survey one potentially suitable site per year in order to seek additional populations.</td>
<td>Fenn's &amp; Whixall Mosses SSSI, Shropshire</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>SWT, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-faced Darter</td>
<td>SHR WFD SU 03</td>
<td>Encourage volunteer participation in Dragonfly Recording Network.</td>
<td>Fenn's &amp; Whixall Mosses SSSI, Shropshire</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>SWT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key to organisations
- CCW Countryside Council for Wales
- SC Shropshire Council
- SWT Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- BDS British Dragonfly Society

**Plan Author:** Caroline Daguet, British Dragonfly Society  
**Plan last revised:** July, 2006  
**Pdf correct 23.03.2009**