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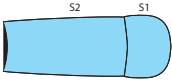
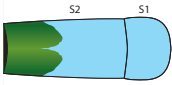
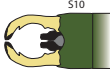
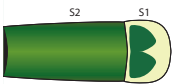
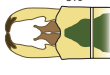
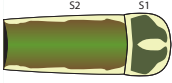
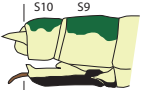
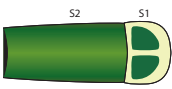
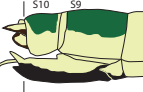
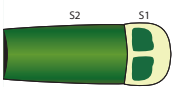
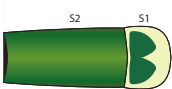
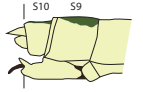
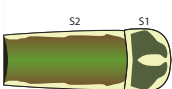
A summary of key features of mature adults for the pond breeder in Britain or Ireland.

MALES

DEMOISELLES	ABDOMEN
Beautiful Demoiselle page 54	Metallic blue-green
Banded Demoiselle page 56	

FEMALES

Beautiful Demoiselle page 54	Metallic green, with bronzy tip and narrow brownish stripe on top of S8–10
Banded Demoiselle page 56	Metallic green, with bronzy tip and narrow pale stripe on top of S8–10

EMERALD DAMSELFLIES: MALES	ABDOMEN (8× life-size)	
	APPENDAGES / S10 (from above)	S2 / S1
Emerald Damselfly page 58	 Apps. black; lower pair straight , narrow tips; S10 blue	S2 all powder blue 
Scarce Emerald Damselfly page 60	 Apps. black; lower pair incurved , broad tips; S10 blue	S2 front half powder blue 
Willow Emerald Damselfly page 64	 Apps. pale; lower pair short, dark; S10 metallic bronzy-green	S2 metallic green 
Southern Emerald Damselfly page 62	 Apps. pale; lower pair tips point outwards; S10 metallic bronzy-green with pale edges	S2 metallic bronzy-green 
FEMALES	OVIPOSITOR / S9–10 (side view)	S2 / S1
Emerald Damselfly page 58	 Ovipositor extends to tip of S10, dark below; sheath pointed	S2 metallic green; S1 spots triangular 
Scarce Emerald Damselfly page 60	 Ovipositor extends beyond S10, dark below; sheath pointed	S2 metallic green; S1 spots rectangular 
Willow Emerald Damselfly page 64	 Ovipositor extends to tip of, or just beyond, S10, dark patches; sheath rounded	S2 metallic green 
Southern Emerald Damselfly page 62	 Ovipositor extends to tip of, or just beyond, S10, pale; sheath rounded	S2 metallic bronzy-green 

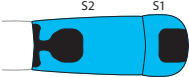
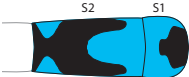
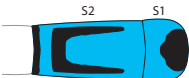
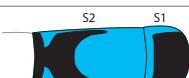
The coloured blocks relate broadly to the types of damselfly (see pages 15–36). The principal differences between the types and species are given; bold text indicates diagnostic features.

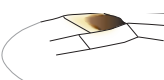
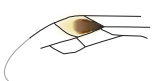
THORAX	WINGS	WING-SPOT	LEGS	EYES
Metallic blue-green	Wholly brown-black; tip & base sometimes paler		Black	Dark red
	Broad blue-black band			

Metallic green	Wholly brownish	 white 'false wing-spot'	Black	Dark red
	Wholly greenish	 white 'false wing-spot'		

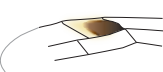
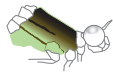
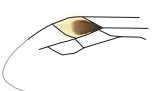
THORAX		BACK OF HEAD	WING-SPOT	LEGS	EYES
ABOVE	SIDE				
Metallic green above, with powder blue pronotum; powder blue below		Green	 narrow: length/width >3	Mainly black	Blue
			 broad: length/width <3		
Metallic green above, with narrow shoulder stripes and prominent 'spur' marking		Yellow	 large and pale	Black and cream	Brownish
Metallic bronzy-green above, with broad yellowish shoulder stripes			 black and white	Cream with black stripes	

Metallic green above; yellow below		Green	 narrow: length/width >3	Black and cream	Brown
			 broad: length/width <3		
Metallic green above, with incomplete, narrow shoulder stripes and prominent 'spur' on side		Yellow	 large and pale	Black and cream	
Metallic bronzy-green above, with broad yellowish shoulder stripes			 black and white	Cream with black stripes	

SPECIES	ABDOMEN (2× life-size)	S2 / S1 (8× life-size)
Large Red Damselfly page 68		
Small Red Damselfly page 70		
White-legged Damselfly page 74		
Common Blue Damselfly page 76		
Variable Damselfly page 80		
Azure Damselfly page 78		
Southern Damselfly page 82		
Northern Damselfly page 84		
Irish Damselfly page 86		
Dainty Damselfly page 88		
Blue-tailed Damselfly page 92		
Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly page 94		
Red-eyed Damselfly page 96		
Small Red-eyed Damselfly page 98		

THORAX		PRONOTUM (rear edge)	WING-SPOT	LEGS	EYES
ABOVE	SIDE				
Two red shoulder stripes	One black stripe		Black	Black	Red
Wholly bronzy-black	Two black stripes		Red	Red or pink	
Four blue stripes			Pale brown	Broad, white tibiae	Green-blue
Broad blue shoulder stripes			Black	Black and pale blue; narrow tibiae	
Broken blue shoulder stripes					
Narrow blue shoulder stripes					
					
					
					
			Pale		
Narrow blue shoulder stripes				Black and pale blue	
					
Wholly black			Black	Black	Deep burgundy-red
Narrow shoulder-stripes, usually incomplete				Dark bluish-grey	Tomato-red

SPECIES	ABDOMEN (2× life-size)
Large Red Damselfly page 68	Form <i>typica</i>  Form <i>fulvipes</i>  Form <i>melanotum</i> 
Small Red Damselfly page 70	Form <i>typica</i>  Form <i>melanogastrum</i>  Form <i>erythrogastrum</i> 
White-legged Damselfly page 74	Mature  Immature 
Common Blue Damselfly page 76	Green form  Blue form 
Variable Damselfly page 80	Dark form  Variegated form 
Azure Damselfly page 78	Variegated form  Dark form 
Southern Damselfly page 82	
Northern Damselfly page 84	
Irish Damselfly page 86	
Dainty Damselfly page 88	
Blue-tailed Damselfly page 92	Forms <i>violacea</i> , <i>typica</i> & <i>rufescens</i>  Forms <i>infuscans</i> & <i>rufescens-obsolata</i> 
Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly page 94	Mature  Immature 
Red-eyed Damselfly page 96	
Small Red-eyed Damselfly page 98	

THORAX		PRONOTUM (rear edge)	WING-SPOT	LEGS	EYES
ABOVE	SIDE				
Red or yellow shoulder stripes	One black stripe		Black	Black	Dull red
Very narrow shoulder stripes, broken or absent	Two black stripes		Red	Pinkish	Brownish-red
Four pale stripes			Pale brown	Broad, white tibiae	Greenish
Broad pale green, buff or blue shoulder stripes			Black	Black and pale blue; narrow tibiae	
Narrow pale green or yellow shoulder stripes					
					
					
					
					
			Pale		
Shoulder stripes absent in some forms				Black and pale stripes	Brownish-red
Brownish-green (mainly orange in immature)					
Incomplete, narrow yellow shoulder stripes			Pale brown	Black	Brownish-red
Narrow shoulder stripes				Dark bluish-grey	Brownish above; pale below

MALES

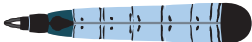
SPECIES	WINGS	HEAD	THORAX	ABDOMEN (life-size)
Hairy Dragonfly page 104	COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Long, thin and brown	EYES: Blue from above	Hairy 	
Azure Hawker page 106	COSTA: Brown	EYES: Blue from above EYE CONTACT ZONE: short		
Common Hawker page 108	COSTA: Yellow	EYES: Blue from above EYE CONTACT ZONE: broad		
Migrant Hawker page 110	COSTA: Brown	EYES: Blue from above		
Southern Migrant Hawker page 112	COSTA: Pale	EYES: Blue		
Southern Hawker page 114	COSTA: Brown	EYES: Blue from above		
Brown Hawker page 116	Brown-tinted	EYES: Bluish from above	TOP: Brown SIDE: 2 prominent yellow stripes	
Norfolk Hawker page 118	Amber base to hindwings WING-SPOT: Amber	EYES: Green	TOP: Brown, without stripes SIDE: 2 yellow stripes	
Emperor Dragonfly page 120	COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Brown	EYES: Blue-green from above	Wholly green with 2 small blue wedges on top	
Lesser Emperor page 124	Yellow suffusion COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Brown	EYES: Green from above	TOP: Violet-brown SIDE: Green-brown	
Vagrant Emperor page 126	Yellow suffusion COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Brown	EYES: Brown from above	Brown	
Golden-ringed Dragonfly page 128	COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Black	EYES: Green from above, just meeting	TOP: 2 tapering yellow stripes SIDE: 2 bold yellow stripes	

FEMALES

ABDOMEN (life-size)	THORAX	HEAD	WINGS
	 Hairy	EYES: Brownish from above	COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Long, thin and brown
		EYES: Brown from above EYE CONTACT ZONE: short	COSTA: Brown
		EYES: Green-brown from above EYE CONTACT ZONE: broad	COSTA: Yellow
		EYES: Green-brown from above	COSTA: Brown
		EYES: Brown from above	COSTA: Pale
		EYES: Brownish-green from above	COSTA: Brown
	TOP: Brown SIDE: 2 prominent yellow stripes	EYES: Yellowish-brown from above	Brown-tinted
	TOP: Brown, without stripes SIDE: 2 yellow stripes	EYES: Green from above	Amber base to hindwings WING-SPOT: Amber
	Wholly green	EYES: Greenish from above	COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Brown
	TOP: Violet-brown SIDE: Green-brown	EYES: Green from above	Yellow suffusion COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Brown
	TOP: Brown SIDE: Greenish	EYES: Brown from above	Yellow suffusion COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Brown
	TOP: 2 tapering yellow stripes SIDE: 2 bold yellow stripes	EYES: Green from above, just meeting	COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Black

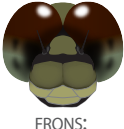
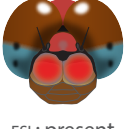
A summary of key features of mature adults of species confirmed breeding in Britain or Ireland.

MALES

SPECIES	WINGS	HEAD	THORAX	ABDOMEN (life-size)
Downy Emerald <i>page 136</i>	Clear with yellow bases	EYES: Bright green from above 'FACE': Dark, with yellowish jaws and pale bar between eyes	Downy; metallic bronzy-green	
Brilliant Emerald <i>page 138</i>	Yellow suffusion, deeper at bases COSTA: Yellow	EYES: Bright green from above 'FACE': As Downy Emerald but with additional yellow 'U' on frons	Shiny emerald green	
Northern Emerald <i>page 140</i>	Yellow suffusion, deeper at bases	EYES: Bright green from above 'FACE': Yellow spot on each side	Metallic bronzy-green	
Common Clubtail <i>page 132</i>	COSTA: Dark WING-SPOT: Dark	EYES: Dull green from above, clearly separated	TOP: Four pale green stripes SIDE: Pale green with thin black line	
Four-spotted Chaser <i>page 146</i>	Dark bases to hindwings and spot on nodes	EYES: Brown from above	Brown	
Broad-bodied Chaser <i>page 148</i>	Dark bases to wings. WING-SPOT: Black	EYES: Brown from above	Brown with 2 pale stripes on top	
Scarce Chaser <i>page 150</i>	Dark bases and spot at wingtips WING-SPOT: Dark brown	EYES: Blue-grey from above	Brown	
Black-tailed Skimmer <i>page 152</i>	Clear; yellow antenodal cross-veins and COSTA WING-SPOT: Black	EYES: Greenish-blue from above	Olive-brown above with 2 incomplete thin black stripes	
Keeled Skimmer <i>page 154</i> (see also <i>page 51</i>)	Clear; yellow antenodal cross-veins and COSTA WING-SPOT: Orange	EYES: Blue-grey from above	Dark brown above with 2 buff stripes, becoming blue with age	

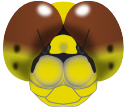
FEMALES			
ABDOMEN (life-size)	THORAX	HEAD	WINGS
	Downy; metallic bronzey-green	EYES: Bright green from above 'FACE': Dark, with yellowish jaws and pale bar between eyes	Clear with yellow bases
	Shiny emerald green	EYES: Bright green from above 'FACE': As Downy Emerald but with additional yellow 'U' on frons	Yellow suffusion , deeper at bases COSTA: Yellow
	Metallic bronzey-green	EYES: Bright green from above 'FACE': Yellow spot on each side	Clear with faint yellow bases
	TOP: Four yellow stripes SIDE: Yellow with thin black line	EYES: Dull green from above, clearly separated	COSTA: Dark WING-SPOT: Dark
	Brown	EYES: Brown from above	Dark bases to hindwings and spot on nodes . Yellow at base and front of inner wings
	Brown with 2 pale stripes on top		Dark bases to wings WING-SPOT: Black
	Brown		Dark bases and spot at wingtips . Yellow suffusion along front of wings WING-SPOT: Brown
	Olive-brown above with 2 incomplete thin black stripes	EYES: Brown from above	Clear COSTA: Yellow WING-SPOT: Black
	TOP: Dark brown above with 2 buff stripes SIDE buff, lacking black stripes		Golden/yellow suffusion to front of basal half with line of yellow cross-veins COSTA: Pale yellow WING-SPOT: Orange

MALES

SPECIES	WINGS	HEAD*	THORAX	LEGS	ABDOMEN (1.2× life-size)
White-faced Darter page 160	Dark basal patches; line of yellow cross-veins near front WING-SPOT: Dark brown	 FRONS: Cream-white	Black above with 2 broken reddish stripes	Black	
Black Darter page 164	Clear WING-SPOT: Black	 FRONS: Darkens with age	TOP: Black SIDE: Yellow with black central patch containing three yellow spots	Black	
Common Darter page 168	Clear with tiny area of yellow at base WING-SPOT: Yellow to reddish-brown	 FSL: absent (except in dark forms in NW Scotland)	TOP: Brown SIDE: 2 large yellow patches on side divided by reddish-brown panel	Dark with yellow stripe along length	
Ruddy Darter page 166	Clear with tiny area of yellow at base (may take on golden hue with age) WING-SPOT: Red-brown	 FSL: present	TOP: Red-brown with black collar SIDE: Yellowish	Black	
Red-veined Darter page 172	Yellow bases and red costa and other veins WING-SPOT: Pale, outlined in black	 FSL: present EYES: blue undersides	Reddish above SIDE: Grey-brown	Dark with yellow stripe along length	
Yellow-winged Darter page 174	Basal half tangerine WING-SPOT: Red or brown with thick black margins	 FSL: present	TOP: Yellow-brown SIDE: Relatively plain yellowish	Dark with yellow stripe along length	

* **Darter heads:** The combination of eye colour, frons colour and the presence of dark lines down each side of the frons helps with darter identification. **The presence or absence of this 'frons side line' (FSL) is indicated in the table above.**

FEMALES

ABDOMEN (1.2× life-size)	LEGS	THORAX	HEAD*	WINGS
	Black	Black above with 2 broken yellowish stripes	 FRONS: Cream-white	Dark basal patches; line of yellow cross-veins near front WING-SPOT: Dark brown
	Black	TOP: Yellow-ochre with black triangle SIDE: Yellow with black central patch containing three yellow spots	 FRONS: Yellow , becoming darker with age	Clear with tiny area of yellow at base WING-SPOT: Black
	Dark with yellow stripe along length	TOP: Brown SIDE: Yellow divided by narrow black lines	 FSL: absent (except in dark forms in NW Scotland)	Clear with tiny area of yellow at base WING-SPOT: Yellow to reddish-brown
	Black	TOP: Yellow-ochre with black collar SIDE: Yellowish	 FSL: present	Clear with tiny area of yellow at base (may take on golden hue with age) WING-SPOT: Red-brown
	Dark with yellow stripe along length	Yellow-ochre with dull greenish-yellow sides	 FSL: present EYES: blue undersides	Yellow veins on basal half of wings WING-SPOT: Pale, outlined in black
		TOP: Yellow-brown SIDE: Relatively plain yellowish	 FSL: present	Basal half tangerine (fading with age) WING-SPOT: Red or brown with thick black margins
 KEELED SKIMMER (for comparison) (see also pages 48–49)	Brown	TOP: Dark brown above with 2 buff stripes SIDE: buff, lacking black stripes	EYES: Brown from above	Clear; yellow antenodal cross-veins and costa. WING-SPOT: Orange

accessory genitalia	structure on underside of S2 of male's abdomen that holds sperm prior to copulation (also known as secondary genitalia)
anal appendages	appendages at tip of abdomen of a Dragonfly larva
antenodal cross-veins	veins at right angles to the costa , between the body and the node
appendages	2–4 extensions at tip of the abdomen, in males used to clasp the female during copulation
caudal lamella	appendage at the rear of damselfly larvae (usually three), used for respiration and locomotion (plural: lamellae)
cerci	upper pair of anal appendages on a dragonfly larva
costa	thick front vein that forms the leading edge of the wing
epiproct	central anal appendage of a dragonfly larva
exuvia	cast larval skin (plural: exuviae)
eye-spots	pale spots behind the eyes of some damselflies, technically known as post-ocular spots
frons	uppermost part of front of head ('face')
immature (imm.)	an adult that has not yet attained the full colouring typically associated with sexual maturity
in tandem	when male and female are joined (before or after copulation)
iridescent	showing colours (typically green, blue or bronzy) that change with the angle of observation and/or illumination
labium	extendable lower lip of the mouthparts of a larva , sometimes termed 'mask', used for catching prey
larva (or nymph)	immature stage before becoming an adult (plural: larvae)
metamorphosis	transition from larva to adult; this is termed 'incomplete metamorphosis' in Dragonflies, since there is no pupal stage
node (or nodus)	notch halfway along leading edge of wing
obelisk position	position adopted by some dragonflies in which the abdomen is pointed towards the sun to avoid overheating
ovipositor	blade-like egg-laying structure under S9–10 of female Dragonflies that deposits eggs into plant material or substrates
paraprocts	lower pair of anal appendages on a dragonfly larva
prementum	stalked base of the labium
pronotum	shield-like plate that covers the top of the front of the thorax
pruinose	coated in a waxy bloom, often pale blue (pruinescence)
S2, S3, S8–10 etc.	abbreviations used for the number, or range, of abdominal or antennal segment(s), counted from the base
shoulder stripes	pair of pale stripes on the top of the thorax (antehumeral stripes)
teneral	newly emerged adult Dragonfly with soft cuticle and shiny wings, lacking full adult coloration
vulvar scale	flap below S8–9 , prominent in some species, present in dragonflies that lay eggs freely onto the water surface; not present in damselflies
wing-spot	dark or coloured cell along leading edge of wing, towards the tip, technically known as pterostigma (female demoiselles have a whitish 'false wing-spot')

The species accounts that follow are grouped as follows:

Pages 54–179: the 58 species that are known to have occurred naturally in Britain or Ireland, including nine confirmed vagrants and the two former breeders (the latter are indicated by pages shaded red).

Pages 180–95: seven potential vagrants (which are indicated by pages shaded grey).

The order of species is broadly taxonomic, although in some cases similar species have been grouped together for ease of reference. The text for each is presented as follows:

IUCN RED LIST CODES, etc.

Britain (LEFT) and Ireland (RIGHT). For potential vagrants the EU Red List code is shown.

For details see *page 230* or the *front flap* of the cover.

ADULT LENGTH (RANGE) *

Bar shows actual maximum and **minimum** total length.

LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION

For details see *pages 228–29*.

STATUS & TREND

For details see *page 230*.

HABITATS

See also *pages 30–31*.

DISTRIBUTION MAP

For details see *page 225*.

- main range
- isolated record
- former location for regionally extinct species
- European range (for non-breeding species only)

MEASUREMENTS

Typical adult biometrics

ILLUSTRATIONS

Showing key features

THE PLATES

Typically showing both sexes and immature forms from above and the side, scaled optimally for each group.

The following annotations are used on the plates:

- M** male **F** female
- i** immature
- t** teneral **o** old

NOMENCLATURE Follows BDS, or Smallshire & Swash (2020) for species not recorded in Britain or Ireland.

SCALE * of photos



English name

Scientific name × 2

Eu: English name used in Europe; (alternative names are shown in brackets)

Relevant legislation

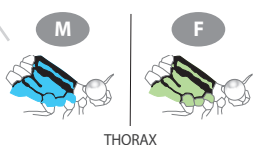
Status & trend [=, ▼, ▲, or ?]

Principal habitat(s) and secondary habitat(s)



Overall length: xx–xxmm

Hindwing: xx–xxmm



LOOK-ALIKES

The species or forms most likely to cause confusion.

An introductory paragraph.

Adult identification:

A concise description of the adult forms, detailing the key identification features, with the most important highlighted in **bold** text.

The key identification features are highlighted on the plate opposite.

Behaviour: Aspects of behaviour that are a clue to identification.

Breeding habitat: A brief summary of the species' habitat preferences.

Population and conservation: Notes on status and distribution, and a résumé of threats and conservation action.

FLIGHT PERIOD

The darker the shade of green, the more likely to be seen at that time. For vagrants, the flight period shown is that for northern Europe.

WHERE TO LOOK

Suggestions of typical sites, or key areas to look for scarce species.

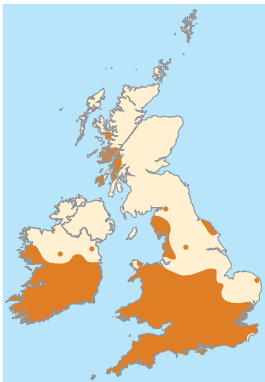
OBSERVATION TIPS

Suggestions and tips to help you find and watch the species.

* Applies to printed book only.

Fairly common ▲

River, stream



Overall length: 45–49 mm
Hindwing: 29–36 mm

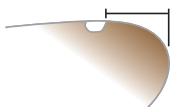
A common large and conspicuous damselfly that is typical of fast-flowing waters in southern and western Britain. Living up to its common name, it presents a dazzling spectacle that greatly enhances the rivers and streams that it inhabits.

Adult identification: MALE: Wings dark brown-black with iridescent blue veins; the extreme tips and bases may be paler and immatures have browner wings. The body is metallic blue-green.
FEMALE: Wings iridescent dark brown with a white ‘false wing-spot’ that lies farther from the tip than in Banded Demoiselle (page 56). The body is metallic green with a bronzy tip to the abdomen.

Behaviour: Males are territorial, perching on bankside vegetation and trees. They habitually flick open their wings when perched, and dash off to chase passing insects, often returning to the same perch. Females live away from water unless egg-laying or seeking a mate, and individuals of both sexes frequently stray well away from water. Females lay up to 300 eggs at a time into emergent or floating vegetation, such as water-crowfoot, often submerging to do so.

Breeding habitat: This is one of the few British species that is restricted to running water, being found only along streams and rivers, often acidic, with a sand or gravel bottom. Although mostly found along heathland and moorland streams, it also occurs widely in farmland and woodland, including well-shaded watercourses.

Population and conservation: Often widespread and abundant along suitable watercourses in the south and west, but absent or at least very local over much of the rest of England, Scotland and the northern half of Ireland. Although it is said to be restricted to unpolluted waters, many stretches that have suffered from localized farm pollution incidents appear to recover and remain occupied. Recent, limited range expansion may be due to improved water quality.



BEAUTIFUL DEMOISELLE



BANDED DEMOISELLE

Comparison of position of ‘false wing-spot’ in female demoiselles

LOOK-ALIKES

Banded Demoiselle (page 56)

WHERE TO LOOK

Found along many watercourses in south-west England, Wales and southern Ireland. Elsewhere, it is localized and usually only found along heathland streams.

OBSERVATION TIPS

Sits on sunny perches over fast-flowing water and flits slowly over the water with a distinctive fluttering flight. They can be wary, so a slow approach is needed to obtain close views.

Mature male: iridescent,
wholly dark wings

Female: wings brownish, each
with a white spot

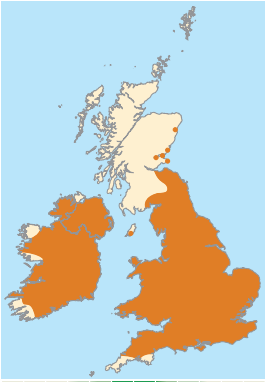


LC LC **Banded Demoiselle**

Calopteryx splendens ×2

Common ▲

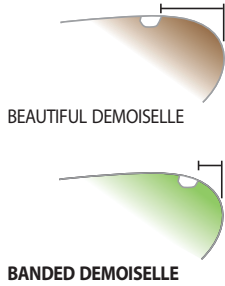
River, stream, canal



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Overall length: 45–48 mm

Hindwing: 27–35 mm



Comparison of position of 'false wing-spot' in female demoiselles

A stunning damselfly, often encountered along slow-flowing streams and rivers in the lowlands.

Adult identification: MALE: Wings translucent, each with a broad, dark, iridescent **blue-black spot** (or band) across the outer part; on immatures, this marking is dark brown. The body is metallic blue-green. **FEMALE:** Wings translucent **pale green iridescent**, with a white 'false wing-spot' nearer the tip than in Beautiful Demoiselle (page 54), and a metallic green body; S8–10 bronze-coloured with a narrow stripe down the middle that is usually paler than in Beautiful Demoiselle.

Behaviour: Males are territorial, but large numbers can be found among lush bankside vegetation and on floating plants. They court females by flicking their wings open and performing an aerial dance in front of them. Like many damselflies, females stay away from water unless looking for a mate or egg-laying. The adults often make use of luxuriant vegetation like nettle beds and tall emergent grasses. Females can lay about 10 eggs per minute for up to 45 minutes, laying into a wide variety of emergent or floating plants, often submerging to do so.

Breeding habitat: Along with the more locally distributed White-legged Damselfly, this species is characteristic of mature, slow-flowing streams and rivers, and sometimes canals, with muddy sediment; it can occur with Beautiful Demoiselle if patches of sand or gravel are also present. Individuals of both sexes frequently stray well away from water and may be found at ponds where breeding is unlikely.

Population and conservation: The Banded Demoiselle is abundant along many of its occupied watercourses. It is rare in Scotland and scarce in northern England, where there has been some northward range expansion in recent years. It appears to be tolerant of the high nutrient levels typical of the lower stretches of many rivers.

WHERE TO LOOK	OBSERVATION TIPS
Found along slow-flowing watercourses in the lowlands of Ireland, Wales and England. Look for it sitting in sunny patches on sheltered bankside vegetation.	The large size and fluttering wing-beats help to identify both sexes. The greenish females can be inconspicuous against lush vegetation.

 **LOOK-ALIKES**

Beautiful Demoiselle (page 54)

Female: wings
greenish, each
with a white
spot

F

M

Male: conspicuous dark
'band' on each wing

M

Fi

Emerald Damselfly

Lestes sponsa ×2

Eu: Common Spreadingwing

Common ▼

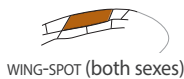
Lake, pond, canal, ditch, bog



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Overall length: 35–39 mm

Hindwing: 19–24 mm

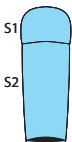


M

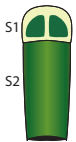
F



THORAX



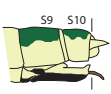
S1/S2



S1/S2



APPENDAGES



OVIPOSITOR

A species of shallow, well-vegetated standing waters in both the uplands and the lowlands. Numbers peak in late summer, later than most other damselflies. During 1970–2019 its population, determined by occupancy-detection modelling, declined by 14%, more than that of any other Dragonfly in Britain and Ireland.

Adult identification: All emerald damselflies have largely metallic-green bodies, like the demoiselles, but are distinctly smaller, have clear wings and habitually rest with **wings well-spread**. The narrow wing-spot (length/width >3) is initially pale and develops through brown to blackish.

MALE: Powder blue pruinescence develops on S1–2, S9–10 (sometimes S8) and on the pronotum and sides of the thorax. The eyes are blue. The appendages are prominent, with the smaller, lower pair being **straight**. **FEMALE:** Abdomen distinctly thicker than male's, usually lacking any blue, and with beige underparts (although rarely pruinesces with age). The eyes are brown. The ovipositor is prominent and just **reaches** the tip of S10. S1 has a diagnostic pair of **rounded** dark spots. Other minor features include pale lower lobes to the pronotum, an isolated metallic spot just above the base of the middle leg, and thin, yellowish shoulder stripes. **IMMATURE:** Both sexes are metallic emerald with warm-buff underparts, and mature over a period of two weeks or so, a much longer period than in Scarce Emerald Damselfly (page 60).

Behaviour: The elongated eggs are inserted into the stems of emergent plants (e.g. rushes), the female starting above water and often submerging completely.

Breeding habitat: Tends to favour smaller, shallow standing waters with luxuriant vegetation, such as tall grass, rushes and sedges. Sites range from acidic bog pools, through enriched ponds to brackish ditches. Even sites that dry out in late summer can remain occupied, due to the species' late emergence and the fact that it overwinters as eggs.

Population and conservation: May be affected locally by large-scale dredging of well-vegetated ponds and ditches, although the reasons for its national decline are currently unclear. The species is classified as Near Threatened in Europe.

WHERE TO LOOK

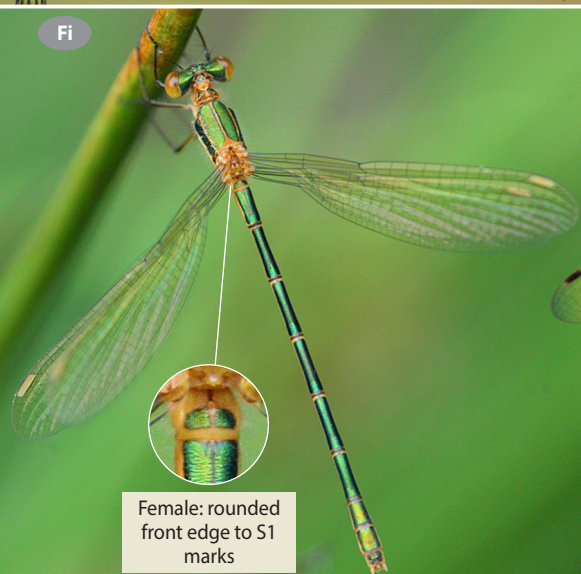
Rushy pools almost anywhere in Britain and Ireland during late summer.

OBSERVATION TIPS

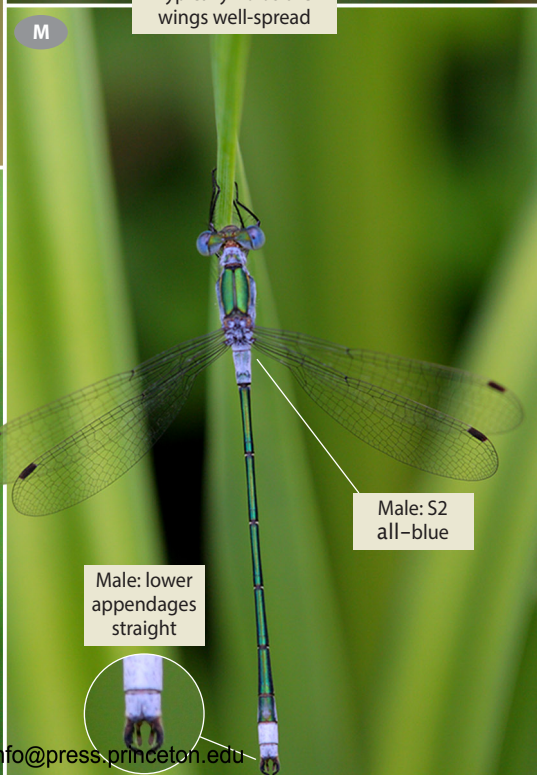
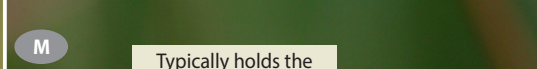
Flies very slowly and can be remarkably inconspicuous. Look closely for adults sitting with their wings spread among dense rushes.

LOOK-ALIKES

Scarce Emerald Damselfly (p. 60)
 [See also Small Spreadingwing (p. 182)]



Female: rounded front edge to S1 marks



Typically holds the wings well-spread

Male: S2 all-blue

Male: lower appendages straight

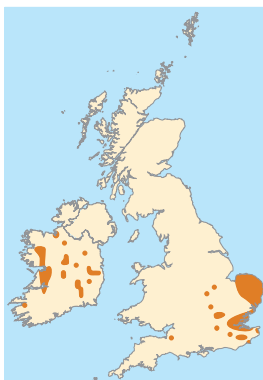
LC NT Scarse Emerald Damselfly

Lestes dryas ×2

Eu: Robust Spreadwing

Rare =

Lake, pond, ditch



Overall length: 34–37 mm

Hindwing: 20–27 mm

A rare and enigmatic species of ephemeral and transitional sites where few other Dragonflies can survive.

Adult identification: Both sexes have largely metallic green bodies with a bronzy iridescence, and habitually rest with **wings well-spread**. This species is **more robustly built** than Emerald Damselfly (page 58) and has slightly **broader wing-spots**, but **differences in genitalia provide the only reliable means of identification**. **MALE:** Powder blue pruinescence develops on S1, usually only the **front half or so of S2**, S9–10 (sometimes S8), the pronotum and the sides of the thorax. Eyes bluer than all but the oldest Emerald Damselflies. The lower appendages are distinctively thick and **incurved** at the tip. **FEMALE:** Thorax and abdomen **chunky**, lacking any blue, and with greenish-cream underparts. Eyes brown. The ovipositor is prominent and just **protrudes** beyond the tip of S10. S1 has a diagnostic pair of **square**, dark marks. Other minor features include metallic green lower lobes to the pronotum, extensive dark metallic area above the base of the middle leg and very thin incomplete shoulder stripes. **IMMATURE:** Both sexes are metallic chocolate-emerald with greenish-cream underparts and lack the ‘juvenile’ pinkish-buff colour phase of Emerald Damselfly.

Behaviour: Elongated eggs are laid, usually above water, into plant stems, e.g. rushes, which are covered as water levels rise in winter.

Breeding habitat: Around the Thames Estuary, it occurs in coastal ditches choked with vegetation. Also found at a few shallow ponds and lakes inland in Norfolk and more widely in Ireland. These sites may dry out occasionally but remain occupied because the species emerges late, overwinters as eggs and has fast-growing larvae.

Population and conservation: Believed extinct in England until re-discovered in Norfolk in 1983. Subsequently found at several sites in south-east England, many of which are at risk from abstraction, eutrophication, overgrazing, successional change, drought and coastal flooding. There are signs of recent expansion in south-east England, especially inland. The species has been found to be more widespread in Ireland than previously thought, although populations vary widely between years.

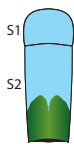
WING-SPOT (both sexes)

M

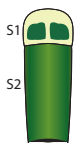
F



THORAX



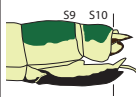
S1/S2



S1/S2



APPENDAGES



OVIPOSITOR

WHERE TO LOOK

Densely vegetated coastal ditches (e.g. at Canvey Island, Essex), Breckland ponds (e.g. Thompson Common, Norfolk) and turloughs in The Burren, Co. Clare.

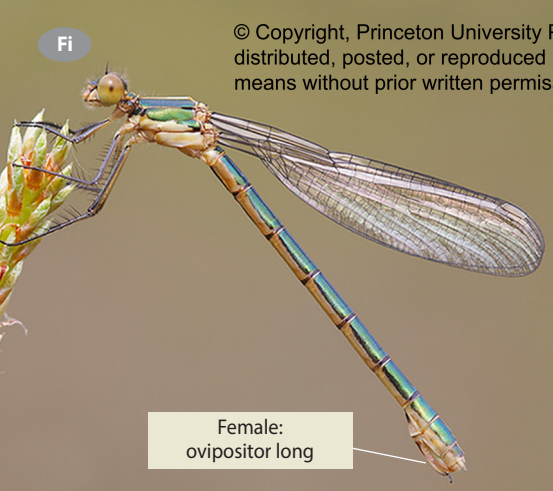
OBSERVATION TIPS

Very similar in character to Emerald Damselfly, flying slowly amongst dense emergent vegetation. Close study is essential to confirm identification.

LOOK-ALIKES

Emerald Damselfly (page 58)

[See also Small Spreadwing (p. 182)]



LC **Southern Emerald Damselfly**

Lestes barbarus ×2

Eu: Migrant Spreadwing

Rare ?

Pond, ditch



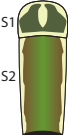
Overall length: 40–45 mm
Hindwing: 20–27 mm



WING-SPOT (both sexes)



THORAX (both sexes)



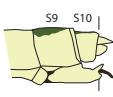
S1/S2 (both sexes)

M



APPENDAGES

F



OVIPOSITOR

LOOK-ALIKES

Emerald Damselfly (page 58)
Scarce Emerald Damselfly (p. 60)
Willow Emerald Damselfly (p. 64)
[See also Small Spreadwing (p. 182)]

A large emerald damselfly that occurs just across the English Channel and has made a faltering attempt to colonize Britain.

Adult identification: Differs from other emerald damselflies in Britain in having **bicoloured** wing-spots. These are similar to those of the blue-tailed damselflies (pages 92–95) but **longer** (about 4× the width) and much more conspicuous. The wings are typically **held well-spread**. Both sexes are mainly **metallic green**, becoming bronzy with age. The eyes are greenish, the rear of head is **yellow** and the edges to the top of S8–10 are pale. The shoulder stripes are relatively **broad** and yellow. **MALE:** Generally lacks blue pruinescence, although S10 is whitish. From above, the upper appendages are pale with dark tips and the lower appendages are **small, pointed and outcurved** at the tips. **FEMALE:** Ovipositor is **entirely pale**. **IMMATURE:** Wing-spots wholly pale initially, as with other emerald damselflies.

Behaviour: Breeding biology is similar to other emerald damselflies, but the eggs may be laid into woody stems, such as those of willows, as well as rushes, sedges and other wetland plants.

Breeding habitat: Breeding attempts in Britain have been in dune ponds and ditches. Elsewhere, it is a specialist of seasonally flooded still waters, sometimes slightly brackish. These habitats typically dry out early in the summer and eggs are often laid in apparently dry areas. It is often found some distance from water.

Population and conservation: First seen in Britain in 2002 in Norfolk and during 2004–10 in Essex, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk and Sussex, with eggs laid at two sites. Found breeding on the Isle of Wight in 2015 and in Buckinghamshire in 2018–19, and a small colony was found in Cornwall in 2024, although most sites remain in south-east England. There have been sporadic records from the Channel Islands and there is evidence that it has been breeding there since 1995.

WHERE TO LOOK

Most likely to occur at waters near the south or south-east coasts, at or near temporary pools in sand dunes or coastal marshes.

OBSERVATION TIPS

Similar to the commoner emerald damselflies in holding their wings spread at rest, but appear larger and paler and have diagnostic two-toned wing-spots.



F

Female: ovipositor usually pale

Typically holds the wings well-spread

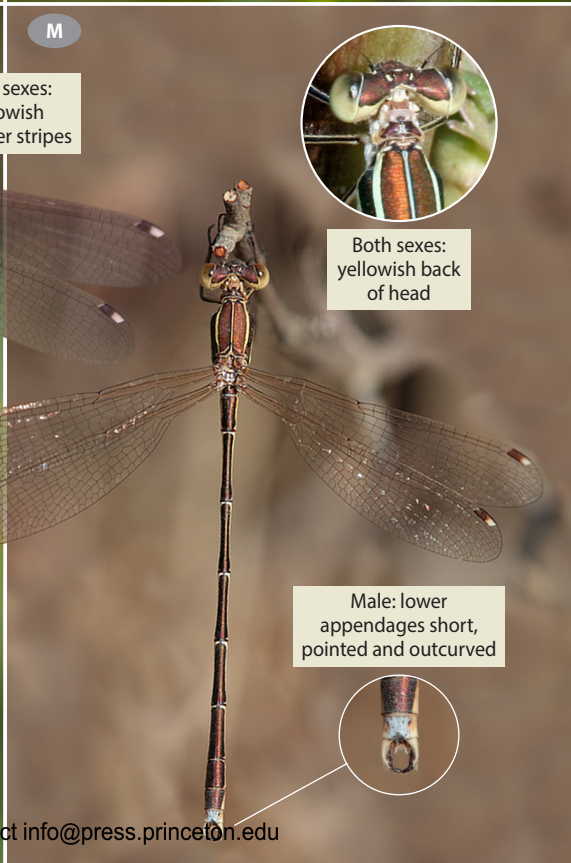


Both sexes:
brown-and-white
wing-spots



F

Both sexes:
yellowish
shoulder stripes



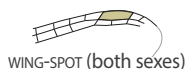
M

Both sexes:
yellowish back
of head

Male: lower
appendages short,
pointed and outcurved

Eu: Western Willow Spreadingwing**Uncommon** ▲**Lake, pond, river, stream, canal, ditch**

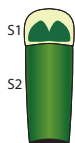
J F M A M J J A S O N D

Overall length: 39–48 mm**Hindwing:** 23–28 mm

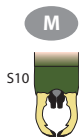
WING-SPOT (both sexes)



THORAX (both sexes)



S1/S2 (both sexes)



APPENDAGES



OVIPOSITOR

**LOOK-ALIKES**

Emerald Damselfly (page 58)
 Scarce Emerald Damselfly (p. 60)
 Southern Emerald Damselfly (p. 62)
 [See also Small Spreadingwing (p. 182)]

Easily overlooked, due to an association with waterside trees, where the large, long-bodied adults may be seen hanging cryptically with their wings spread wide; has recently become well-established in south-east England, centred around Suffolk.

Adult identification: Both sexes are mainly **metallic green**, like other emerald damselflies, but larger, darker and **without** blue eyes or pruinescence. The wing-spots are large and **pale, outlined in black** (beware of teneral of other species of emerald damselfly, which also have pale wing-spots and lack pruinescence). The thorax has thin yellow shoulder stripes; the lower border of the metallic green on the side of the thorax is **irregular and forms a dark 'spur'** (this may be present in a reduced form in the commoner emerald damselflies). **MALE:** Abdomen **very long**. The upper appendages are distinctly **pale with black tips** and are more than 3× the length of the lower appendages. **FEMALE:** The ovipositor is dark with a pale area on the lower edge.

Behaviour: Eggs are laid into twigs overhanging water using serrations on the underside of the ovipositor; this results in distinctive oval scars (as shown on the plate).

Breeding habitat: Standing and slow-flowing waters with overhanging trees, where males defend vertical territories. In Suffolk, egg-laying has been observed on willows, Alder, Ash, birches, Hawthorn and Elder.

Population and conservation: The first records were of an adult found dead near Pevensy, East Sussex, in 1979; an exuvia collected at Cliffe Marshes, north Kent, in 1992; and a female found on the Suffolk coast in 2007. In 2009, however, some 400 were reported, including teneral, from 35 sites in east Suffolk, north Essex and south Norfolk, perhaps from an undetected influx in 2007. The species has since become firmly established, spreading to Kent by 2012 and Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and West Sussex by 2015. During the next decade it spread as far west as Somerset and as far north as Tyneside. In continental Europe, its range extends from north-west Africa to the English Channel and North Sea coasts. It is widespread on Jersey, and was first recorded on Guernsey in 2003 and Alderney in 2010.

WHERE TO LOOK

Scan trees beside or near water, from eye-level to several metres up, for adults hanging on twigs at an angle of about 45°, often in shade.

OBSERVATION TIPS

Breeding is indicated by series of egg-laying scars on branches, which often remain visible for several years.



scars



F

Both sexes: lack pruinescence and have a noticeably long abdomen and large pale wing-spots

M

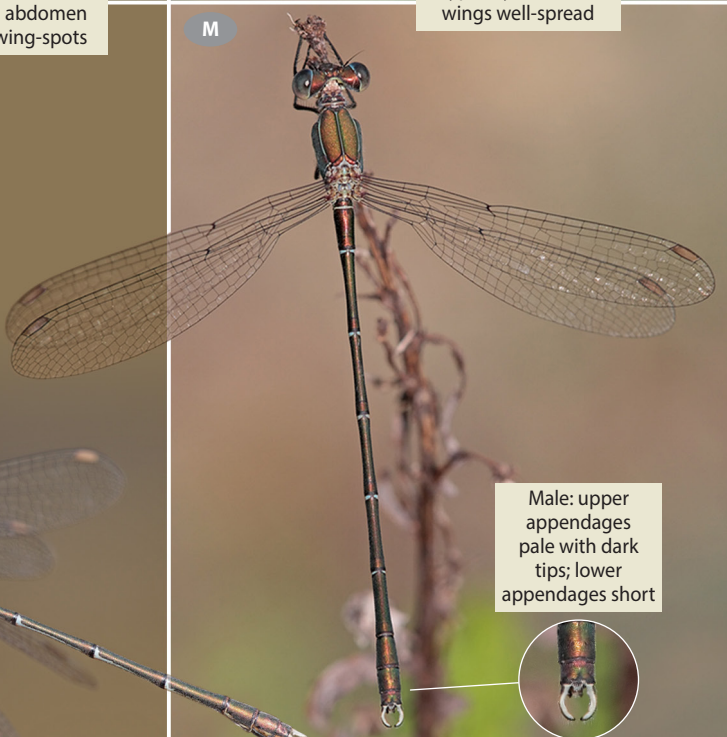


Fi

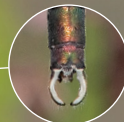
Typically holds the wings well-spread

M

Both sexes: prominent zig-zag on side of thorax



Male: upper appendages pale with dark tips; lower appendages short



Eu: Common Winter Damsel

Rare vagrant

Lake, pond, ditch



Overall length: 34–39mm
Hindwing: 18–23mm

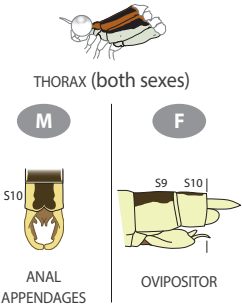
Although this species is as large as the related emerald damselflies, the lack of bright colours means that it can easily be overlooked.

Adult identification: Both sexes are pale **fawn**, but darker after hibernation, with **dark, slightly metallic markings** down the centre of the abdomen and top of the thorax. Although this metallic colouring recalls emerald damselflies, the wings are held closed when at rest, like other damselflies. The brownish shoulder stripes are **as broad as** the dark lines below them, which, together with ‘rocket’-shaped dark markings on S3–6, give a passing resemblance to a dull female Common Blue Damselfly (page 76). The long, brown wing-spots are **nearer** the wingtip on the forewings than on the hindwings. **MALE:** Upper appendages **pale and pincer-shaped** like emerald damselflies (pages 58–65). **FEMALE:** Appendages **longer** than in emerald damselflies and straight, but the ovipositor is **shorter**.

Behaviour: This and another very similar *Sympecma* species, Siberian Winter Damsel *S. paedisca*, are the only European Dragonflies to overwinter as adults. Adults are found in all months on the continent, emerging from July and some persisting until the following June. From late September, adults hibernate in sheltered areas away from water, occasionally rousing to fly in warm weather. They return to water from March and females lay eggs into floating dead stems of reeds and other similar debris. The larvae develop rapidly during the summer and adults emerge from July onwards.

Breeding habitat: Breeds in standing waters, sometimes brackish, with abundant emergent vegetation where adults gather in spring. In autumn, adults move to sheltered areas and hibernate amongst dry grasses, twigs or woodpiles *etc.*, but sometimes on exposed perches.

Population and conservation: Recorded twice in Britain: in December 2009 a female was discovered inside a house at Tonna, near Neath, south Wales; the second was also of a female, at Wildern, near Southampton, Hampshire in May 2022. This species is found throughout southern and central Europe and eastwards, and has increased in the Netherlands in recent years. It may have bred in 1945 on Jersey, where the only other record was in 1992.



WHERE TO LOOK	OBSERVATION TIPS
Might be found in late summer near the south-east coast. In rest of Europe often seen away from water, along sheltered rides in woodland.	An inconspicuous damselfly, in both colour and behaviour, often sitting with its abdomen held tight against a perch.

LOOK-ALIKES
Emerald damselflies (pp. 58–65)
Common Blue Damselfly (p. 76)

F July



Both sexes: wing-spot nearer wingtip on forewing



M



M

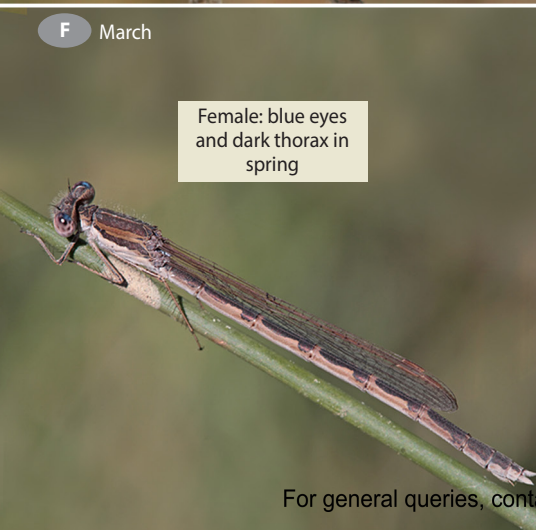
F September



M

Both sexes: wings held together, to one side of abdomen

F March



Female: blue eyes and dark thorax in spring



M

Both sexes: metallic markings and long appendages suggest emerald damselflies, but the wings are held together

LC LC Large Red Damselfly

Pyrhosoma nymphula ×2

Eu: Large Red Damsel

Abundant =

Lake, **pond**, river, stream,
canal, **ditch**, **bog**



Overall length: 33–36 mm
Hindwing: 19–24 mm

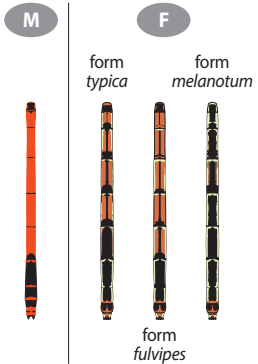
One of the three most widespread Dragonflies, this is the first species to emerge in spring and brings a welcome dash of colour to otherwise sombre waters at that time of year.

Adult identification: Relatively large, robust and active, differing from the tiny, weak Small Red Damselfly (page 70) in having **black**, rather than reddish, legs and wing-spot, and **broad red or yellow shoulder stripes**. Both sexes have **red eyes**, duller in females and immatures, and yellow sides to the thorax. **MALE:** Abdomen deep red with **bronzy-black bands on S7–9, although these can be difficult to see in strong sunlight**. The thorax has a bronzy-black top and stripe across the side. **FEMALE:** Has three colour forms. The commonest, *typica*, is like the male but has more extensive black on all abdominal segments. The dark form *melanotum* has yellow shoulder stripes (as do immatures of both sexes) and very restricted areas of red and yellow on the largely black abdomen; the red joints between the terminal segments help to distinguish it from female Red-eyed Damselfly (page 96), in which they are blue. The red form *fulvipes* has black on the abdomen intermediate between *typica* and the male.

Behaviour: Males emerge slightly earlier and in larger numbers than females, maturing in about 12 days, four days less than females. Males are aggressive, investigating any passing insects and driving off other males. The elongated eggs are laid in tandem into submerged vegetation in batches of about 350.

Breeding habitat: Occupies most wetland habitats, from acidic moorland bog pools to brackish ditches, but avoids fast-flowing waters and shows some preference for sheltered waters with abundant aquatic plants.

Population and conservation: This species' broad distribution reflects a wide habitat tolerance. It is found in virtually every part of Britain and Ireland, although the paucity of records in some arable and upland areas indicates that it is not universally common.



ABDOMEN (life-size)



LOOK-ALIKES

Small Red Damselfly (page 70)
Red-eyed Damselfly (page 96)

WHERE TO LOOK

This species can be found almost anywhere from spring to midsummer. Indeed, it not infrequently finds humans – having a habit of landing on pale clothing!

OBSERVATION TIPS

On hot days, territorial males can fly rapidly enough to give the impression of darters, but the peak flight periods do not overlap.

M



Male: black legs and wing-spots (red or reddish in Small Red Damselfly (page 70))

M



F *typica*



F *typica*



F *typica*



F *fulvipes*



F *melanotum*



Female: abdomen ranges from mostly black to mostly red

NT Small Red Damselfly

Ceragrion tenellum x2

Eu: Small Red Damselfly

Scarce ▼

Pond, stream, ditch, bog, flush



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Overall length: 25–35 mm

Hindwing: 15–21 mm

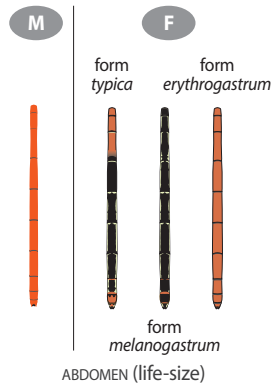
This is one of Britain's two red damselflies and amongst the smallest of all the damselflies. It flies weakly at heathland bogs and streams in southern England and west Wales.

Adult identification: A very small damselfly, about 15% shorter than Large Red Damselfly (page 68). Both sexes have a diagnostic combination of **red or reddish legs, eyes and wing-spot**. The thorax is bronzy-black on top, with no more than a hint of pale shoulder stripes, and yellow on the sides with **two** black lines. **MALE:** Abdomen entirely bright red. **FEMALE:** Has three colour forms. The abdomen of the 'normal' form (*typica*) is bronzy-black with S1–3 and S9–10 mostly red. The dark form (*melanogastrum*) occurs quite frequently and has an almost entirely dark abdomen marked with pale segment divisions, the last three of which are reddish. An uncommon red form (*erythrogastrum*) resembles the male.

Behaviour: Adults fly low and weakly, rarely moving far from breeding waters. Like the Southern Damselfly (page 82), which sometimes occurs at the same site, they are reluctant to fly in any but the warmest, sunniest and calmest conditions. They can be surprisingly inconspicuous, especially the darker females. Elongated eggs are laid while in tandem into submerged and emergent plants.

Breeding habitat: Prefers shallow, relatively warm acidic waters, occurring mainly at pools, seepages and small streams. These are usually associated with heathland bogs or old tin or clay workings, up to an altitude of about 300 m. Such sites typically have a lush growth of bog-mosses and Marsh St John's-wort. It also occupies pools at a few calcareous mires.

Population and conservation: It can be abundant at breeding sites but these are often quite isolated. The species is therefore vulnerable to local extinctions, losses having occurred at some sites. It can tolerate short-term scrub encroachment around ponds and has been known to colonize new small ponds from adjacent sites.



LOOK-ALIKES

Large Red Damselfly (page 68)

Southern Damselfly (fem.) (p. 82)

WHERE TO LOOK	OBSERVATION TIPS
Boggy heathlands of Surrey/Hampshire, the New Forest, Purbeck and Pembrokeshire and in old tin and clay workings around Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor.	Flies low down and weakly between grass or heathers, where females especially can be very inconspicuous.

Index of English and scientific names

This index includes the English and *scientific* names of all the Dragonflies included in this book.

Bold names are the preferred English names used throughout. Normal text is used for alternative names or names used in Ireland or Europe; these are cross-referenced to the preferred English name, against which all the key entries for the species are listed. Page references given against scientific names are to the main species accounts, larval identification chart and selected entries.

Bold red numbers highlight the main species accounts.

Bold black numbers refer to the tables that summarize the key adult identification features.

Blue numbers relate to larvae, those in **bold** indicating the relevant page in the identification chart.

Italicized numbers indicate page(s) on which a photograph of an *adult* or a *larva* may be found.

Other numbers highlight page(s) where other key information is given.

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