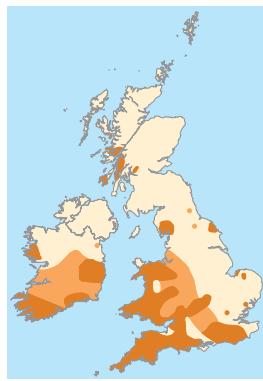


Ir: Beautiful Jewelwing

Locally common

River, stream



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

Overall length: 45–49mm

Hindwing: 29–36 mm



Position of  
'false wing-spot'  
in females

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:** Dark brown-black wings with iridescent blue veins; the extreme tips and bases may be paler and immatures have browner wings. The body is metallic blue-green.

**FEMALE:** Dark brown iridescent wings with a white 'false wing-spot' that lies **further** from the tip than in Banded Demoiselle ([page 62](#)). The body is metallic green with a bronze 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.

### 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.

### LOOK-ALIKES

Banded Demoiselle ([page 62](#))

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Mature males have iridescent,  
wholly dark wings

Females have brownish wings,  
each with a white spot

