

Beautiful Demoiselle

Calopteryx virgo

Insects · On the wing May–Aug



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A large, spectacular damselfly. Males have a brilliant metallic blue-green body and almost entirely dark blue-brown wings; females are bronze-green with smoky brown wings and a small white spot near the tip. Beautiful demoiselles need fast, clean, stony rivers and burns with sandy or gravelly beds, so their presence is a genuine indicator of good water quality.

BEHAVIOUR

The flight is quite unlike other damselflies — a slow, fluttering, butterfly-like beat, often with the wings held wide. Males hold territories along a stretch of burn and perform a display flight for females, hovering and flicking the wings open to show the dark colour. Larvae live among tree roots and gravel in flowing water for two years before emerging.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Demoiselles (Calopterygidae)
SIZE	Body 45–49 mm
STATUS	Native; an indicator of clean, fast-flowing water

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