

A case of a vagrant Dragonfly sighting in Worcestershire - *Ischnura senegalensis*

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There are 46 resident or regularly migrating dragonfly and damselfly species on the UK list along with 10 vagrants, and 12 species accidentally introduced into the UK.

A damselfly seen by Jared Tibbetts in the Hagley Aquatic Centre, Hagley, Worcestershire on the 8th January 2020 turned out to be one of those. It remained undetermined until Andy Parr was checking some old tweets in 2022 and came across an image of the Hagley damselfly (01).



01. Marsh Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura senegalensis* emerged in winter at a garden centre in Hagley 8th January 2020. Jared Tibbetts.

Looking very much like our own Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*, this one was particularly unusual having emerged in the winter, and it turned out to be a Marsh Bluetail *Ischnura senegalensis*. As the name might imply it comes from Africa, the Middle East and south-east Asia. Looking very much like an immature male Blue-tailed Damselfly, the key differences are that the sides of the abdomen are orangey and the second segment has a wavy line separating the black mark from the green background rather than straight. There is slightly more blue on segment 9 as well. A good feature to look for is that the rear edge of the pronotum does not have the upright spike of *Ischnura elegans*

The 12 accidentally introduced species so far recorded in the UK are all from imported waterweeds and they are usually a very long way from their home land. So far we have no species capable of maintaining a population and that is probably due to our temperate climate. The introduced species are more often than not from tropical locations and would not survive in the UK. A case where a species has successfully colonised another continent is *Crocothemis servilla* which arrived in Florida in 1975 from Asia and is now common across most of the southern half of the Florida peninsula (Project Noah website).

We can't add *I. senegalensis* to the 33 species already listed for Worcestershire but it is interesting that these occurrences can happen

References

Project Noah website. Available at:
<https://www.projectnoah.org/spottings/1788236003> [Accessed 08.05.23]

Image

01. Marsh Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura senegalensis* emerged in winter at a garden centre in Hagley 8th January 2020. Jared Tibbetts.