

Unusual behaviour of egg-laying Willow Emerald Damselfly *Chalcolestes viridis*

Andy Warr



01. Willow Emerald Damselfly hanging from a leaf of *Salix* sp. at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons, 14th October 2023. Andy Warr.

On 14th October 2023 I was searching for Willow Emerald Damselflies *Chalcolestes viridis*, or signs of their egg-laying scars at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons. I chanced upon a female, hanging from a branch of a lakeside willow *Salix* sp. (01).

Eggs are typically laid into the bark of twigs or branches overhanging, or alongside water (e.g. Jennings 2022), and this was my first observation when viewing this individual. After a short time however, she took flight and then landed on the tip of a leaf and proceeded to edge her way beneath. To my surprise she adopted the egg-laying posture and commenced laying into the leaf midrib, then after a few minutes moved to a second leaf and repeated this behaviour (02, 03). I have not been able to find any reference to Willow Emerald using leaves as egg depositories, or photographs depicting this behaviour on the internet.



02. Willow Emerald Damselfly egg-laying in leaf of *Salix* sp. at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons, 14th October 2023. Andy Warr.

Eggs hatch the following spring, when the larvae drop into the water below. It is questionable whether the eggs would survive in water, after leaf fall over winter. Mike Averill commented that laying in leaves means that the eggs get to water before hatching and wondered if that is as successful a strategy as waiting in branches until the spring: or was it just a mistake?



03. Willow Emerald Damselfly egg-laying in leaf of *Salix* sp. at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons, 14th October 2023. Andy Warr.

Reference

Jennings, D. 2022. Willow Emerald *Chalcolestes viridis*, the first recorded sighting in VC37. *Worcestershire Record* 50:50-52.

- 01. Willow Emerald Damselfly hanging from a leaf of *Salix* sp. at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons, 14th October 2023. Andy Warr.
- 02. Willow Emerald Damselfly egg-laying in leaf of *Salix* sp. at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons, 14th October 2023. Andy Warr.
- 03. Willow Emerald Damselfly egg-laying in leaf of *Salix* sp. at Throckmorton Outer Lagoons, 14th October 2023. Andy Warr.