



Damselfly

The Red Damselfly

Xanthocnemius zealandica

kihitarā

Size

Typically 16 mm.

Habitat

The larval stage of the red damselfly is found in weedy streams and ponds.

Feeding Habits

The larvae are **carnivores** preying on small animals of all kinds, and the adults capture other insects on the wing.

Special Features

- Damselfly larvae breath with three leaf-like **gills** that stick out like tail filaments at the end of its abdomen.
- When damselflies mate the male clasps neck of the female with claspers found at his abdomen end. They fly together, and the male may even take the female under the water where she lays her eggs on water plants. They can survive underwater for 30 minutes.

- Damselflies have **incomplete metamorphosis** and for the final **moult**, they crawl right out of the water, and the adult emerges.
- The larvae are good at **camouflage**, and can change colour with their surroundings. They swim by waving their body from side to side.



Adult Damselflys

Typical Size

