

The first record of a viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* predated a blue-tailed damselfly *Ischnura elegans*

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The viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* eats invertebrates, mainly spiders, bugs, flies, and isopods (Beebee & Griffiths, 2000). The blue-tailed damselfly *Ischnura elegans* is a small (27–35mm) dark damselfly, widely distributed across Europe and Asia, with a similar range to *Z. vivipara*. It is commonly found in mesotrophic (moderate levels of dissolved nutrients) to eutrophic (rich levels of dissolved nutrients) wet habitats, with a preference for lakes and ponds with some tolerance to brackish water; it flies from around mid-April to September (Bouton et al., 2011; Dudaniec et al., 2018). Hitherto, there have been no records of any damselfly being predated by *Z. vivipara*, although there is a record of a yellow-winged darter *Sympetrum flaveolum* being predated by *Z. vivipara* in northern Spain (Flechoso et al., 2015).

On 13 July 2022, I visited Foulshaw Moss Nature Reserve, Cumbria, England (54° 14'39" N, 2° 50'03" W). This reserve is a raised peat bog habitat, situated on the southern tip of the English Lake District covering an area of 3.5 km². It is an ideal habitat for *Z. vivipara* and the northern viper *Vipera berus*. At 12:07 h, when the weather was partly cloudy with an approximate air temperature of 17 °C, a male *Z. vivipara* was observed basking on the edge of the Foulshaw Moss boardwalk close to the peat moss and near a peat pool. It was here the damselfly alighted only to be grasped by the lizard (Fig. 1). I recorded the lizard taking approximately one minute to ingest the damselfly, during which time the lizard shook the

damselfly from side to side, dragging it backwards across a portion of the boardwalk to force it into its mouth, eventually swallowing the entire damselfly (BHS video, 2023).

Following ingestion, the lizard resumed basking with its mouth agape. The Foulshaw Moss Nature Reserve has an abundance of both damselflies and dragonflies, including the endangered white-faced darter *Leucorrhina dubia*, as well as a diverse array of other invertebrate prey for *Z. vivipara*.

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Figure 1. The male viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* capturing the blue-tailed damselfly *Ischnura elegans*

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