

# fragile forktail

## *Ischnura posita*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Arthropoda  
Class: Insecta  
Order: Odonata  
Family: Coenagrionidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### FEATURES

The fragile forktail is a very small damselfly known for the sideways exclamation mark (!) on its thorax. Males have green eyes and yellow-green faces. The thorax and abdomen are mostly black with light green sides and markings. Rarely, in both males and females, the tip of the abdominal segments nine and ten are blue. Immature females appear as male but with blue thorax and spots behind the eyes.

### BEHAVIORS

Both males and females usually linger among dense herbaceous, shrubby, or floating vegetation, like lily pads or pondweeds. They are likely to emerge during cooler, cloudy weather when predation from larger dragonflies and damselflies decreases. Males perch at varying heights, from the surface of the water to three feet up in stems. Females lay eggs alone on floating plants and stems rising from the water. Females are predators of other damselflies. They like spring-fed ditches, lake shores, ponds, swamps, and slow streams where herbaceous vegetation abounds. Often found in dense sedge or grass beds, though also present in shady woodland areas with herbaceous plant beds. Fragile forktails have a high tolerance for polluted areas. They are found throughout Illinois. Their range is south to the tip of Florida, northeast to New England, west to western Oklahoma and Texas, south through Mexico, and into Guatemala.

### ILLINOIS RANGE





female



male

## **Aquatic Habitats**

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

## **Woodland Habitats**

none

## **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

none