

Cobra Clubtail





# Cobra Clubtail (*Gomphus vastus*) – 2.1", 47-57 mm

## Flight Record:

(5/02-7/09)  
Peaks mid  
May-June.

*Fairly  
Common*

**Habitat:**  
River  
systems

## First Glance:

Medium,  
black w/  
yellow  
marks,  
large club.

Perches  
often on  
leaves in  
trees, or flat  
on rocks  
and  
pathways.

## Compare:

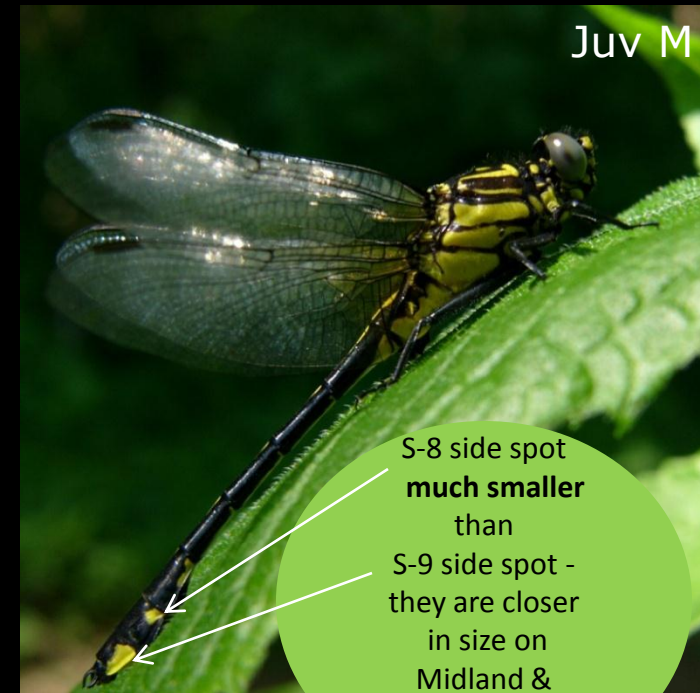
Midland  
Clubtail,  
Black-  
shouldered  
Spinyleg,  
Splendid  
Clubtail



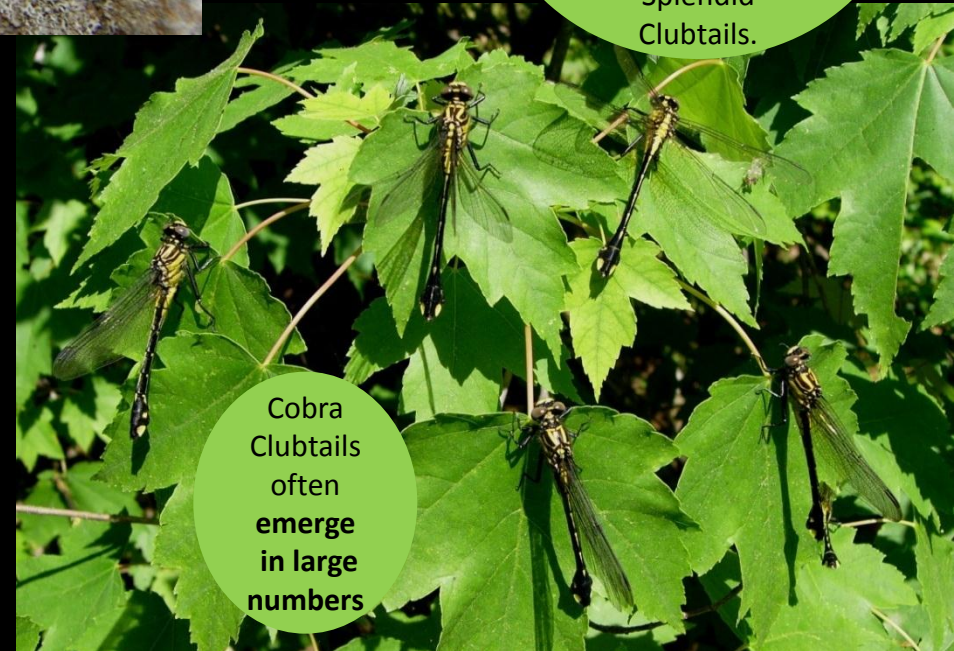
Cobras  
have  
**thick,  
black  
face  
stripes** -  
Midland  
Clubtails  
have  
*none*,  
Splendid's  
are *thin*.



Juv M



Juv M



Cobra  
Clubtails  
often  
emerge  
in large  
numbers



## Notes from the field – Cobra Clubtail:

Cobras have the widest club of any N. Va. Clubtail and are impressive looking insects. They love the Potomac River (especially the stretch from Leesburg, VA to Washington, D.C.) and appear to be one of the area's few clubtails that rarely live in streams. Rivers are their world – look for them along banks, pathways, clearings and meadows of the Potomac in late spring and early summer. They often perch on leaves of Paw Paw, Maple and Ash that grow near the water. During one morning in May, I came across a Maple dripping with teneral Cobras – over 30 juveniles drying their wings in the rising sun.



Several of my Cobra photos are of juveniles with gray-brown eyes. This female has the more typical dark green eyes of an adult.



Accomplished and tenacious predators, this female Cobra caught and devoured a male Eastern Ringtail (another member of the club-tail family) within inches of my camera. At one point she actually climbed onto my finger, continuing to munch away on her impressive prize. It was cloudy – without the sun she had energy to either flee or eat, but not both. She decided to ignore me, and continue her meal.