



Midland Clubtail (*Gomphus fraternus*) – 2.2", 48-55 mm

Habitat Conservation Alert!

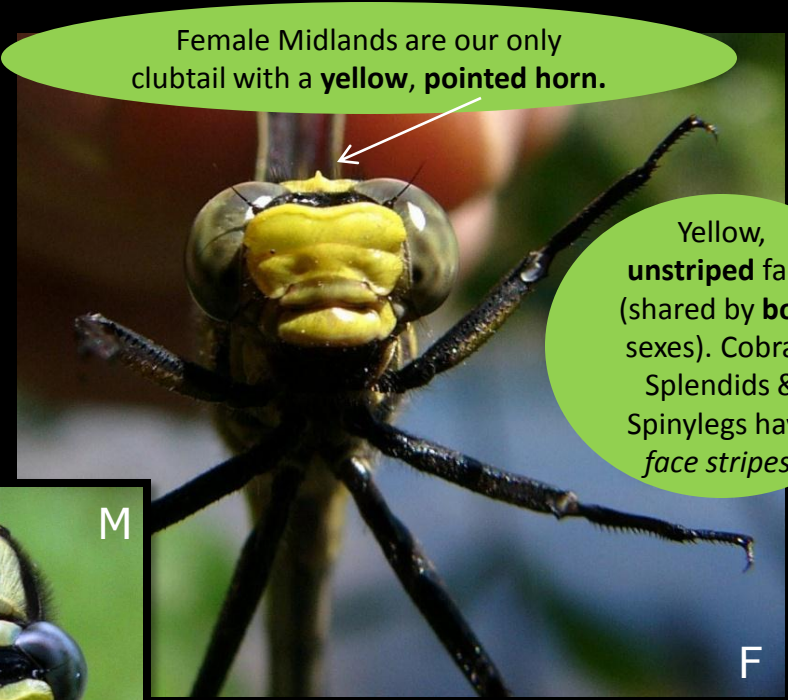
Flight Record:
(5/13-5/30)

Rare

Habitat:
Clean, shallow stretches of river w/ current.

First Glance:
Medium, black and yellow markings. Male has visible club. Flight low, straight. Perches in trees and meadows near river systems.

Compare:
Cobra Clubtail, Black-shouldered Spinyleg, Splendid Clubtail

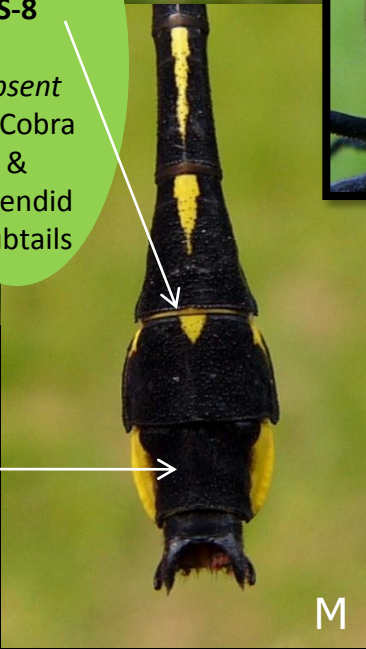


Female Midlands are our only clubtail with a **yellow, pointed horn**.

Yellow, **unstriped** face (shared by **both** sexes). Cobras, Splendids & Spinylegs have *face stripes*.



Center spot on top of S-8
Absent on Cobra & Splendid Clubtails



No spot on top of S-9 (Spinyleg *does* have S-9 spot)



S-8 side spot **almost as big** as S-9 side spot – Cobra's S-8 side spot *much smaller*

Notes from the field – Midland Clubtail:

This rare and brightly-colored clubtail is an exciting treat to find. In over ten years of chasing dragonflies I've only seen three individuals at two sites. They appear to prefer clean, wide, shallow, tree-lined, sunny sections of the Potomac River. They've been seen at Riverbend Park in Great Falls, both by myself and the park's dragonfly expert, Karen Sheffield. After years of dragonfly surveys, and the ability to identify larval cast skins, Karen is a regional authority. She leads great dragonfly programs every year, and has documented several species new to Northern VA.

Like several similar clubtails, ID is all about the two ends – look at the **face** (all yellow, with no stripes) and the top of the **club** (a spot on top of S-8, *no* spot on top of S-9). This is how you'll tell them apart from the very similar Cobra and Splendid Clubtails. Another interesting field mark is the female's neat little horn, only visible up close.

This species helped teach me the benefit of exploring sunny, tall grass meadows near rivers – the closer to the water the better. Look for power and gas line easements along the Potomac. Search patiently through the



The tiny horn is barely visible on this sun-bathing female, perched on a Paw Paw leaf.

tall grass and you're bound to be rewarded. I've been lucky enough to find perched spike-tails, shadowdragons, cruisers, ringtails, darners, and Midland Clubtails in this way. I remember finding the male in my photos on a sunny May morning, perched and hunting over a wet, waist-high meadow along the Potomac. It took me a while to figure out what it was, but that all-yellow face eventually gave it away. I was thrilled to have found a Midland, but didn't realize quite how unusual it was for this area. That was 2005 - I have yet to see another male, and only one more female.