

Sable Clubtail





# Sable Clubtail (*Gomphus rogersi*) – 1.9", 47-50 mm

Habitat Conservation Alert!

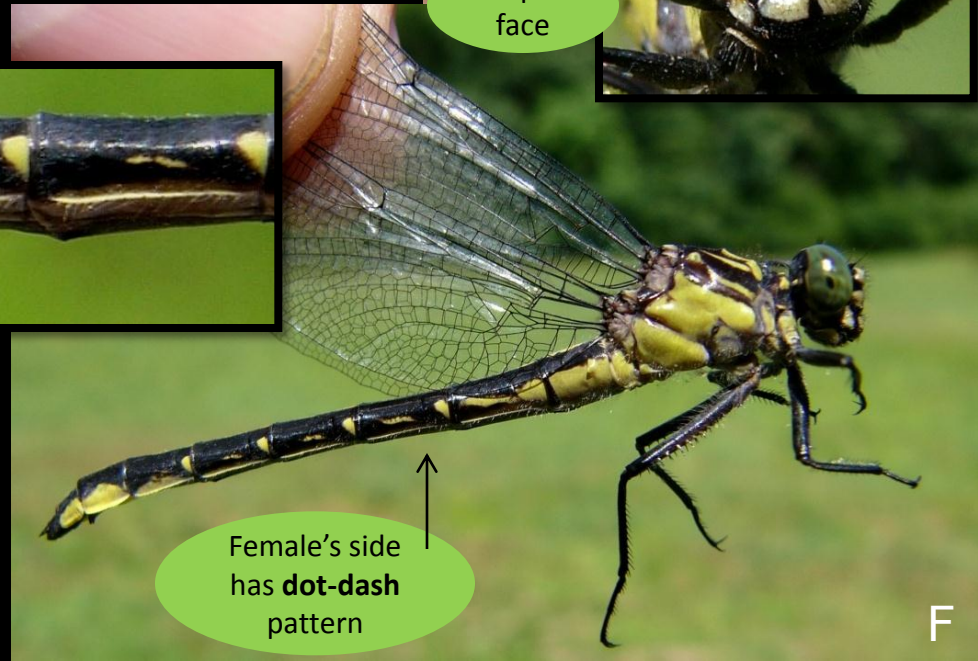
**Flight Record:**  
(6/08-6/25)  
Peaks  
mid-June

Rare

**Habitat:**  
Small, clean  
forest  
streams

**First Glance:**  
Small, thin.  
Almost no club. Flies  
low over  
water, along  
banks and  
among  
forest  
vegetation.  
Perches on  
low shrubs.  
Most active  
mid-late  
afternoon,  
into early  
evening.

**Compare:**  
Lancet  
Clubtail,  
Least  
Clubtail







All photos on this page are males,  
and donated by Gary Myers  
– thanks Gary!

Gary and Jim Waggener found this  
beautiful clubtail at Occoquan Regional Park  
in Fairfax Co. as part of their  
weekly dragonfly surveys,  
coordinated with Audubon Society of Northern VA.

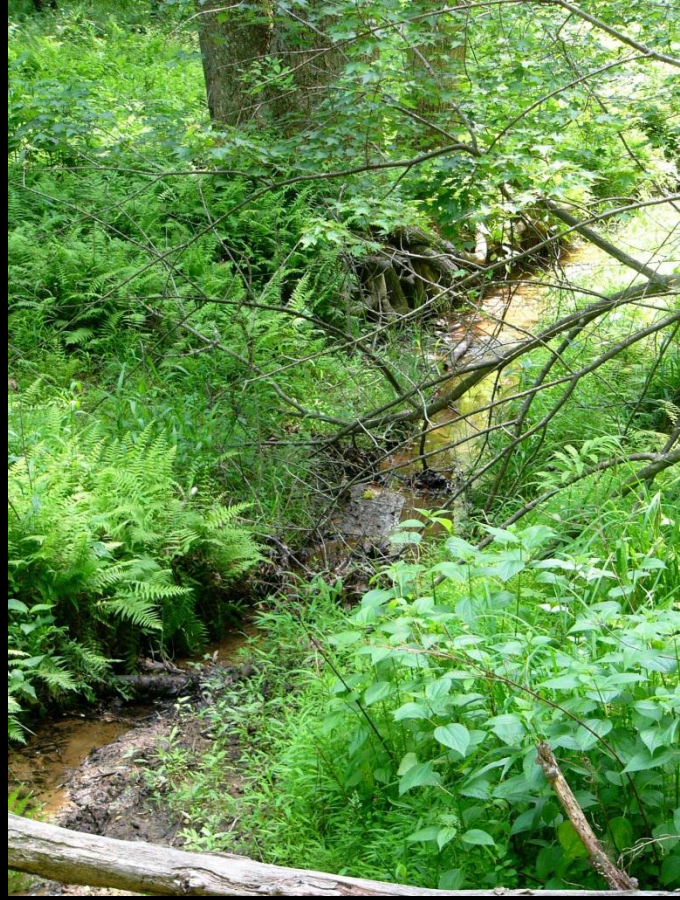
This was only the second sighting of  
Sables in our area.



### Notes from the field – Sable Clubtail:

This clubtail is rare in our area, and a treat to find. Quite small, males appear mostly dark at first glance, while females are slightly brighter, with more yellow. The abdominal markings separate them from Lancet and Least Clubtails, our other two small clubtails in Northern VA.

Two similar species, Green-faced and Rapids Clubtails, have not been included on this site, but a few cast-skins were found along the Potomac River at Riverbend Park, by Karen Sheffield in 2010 and 2011. Were they passing strays from Maryland, larvae washed down-river by a storm, or do they have breeding populations in Northern VA? Karen's excellent surveys will hopefully answer that question, or maybe you will be the one that finds a local population! The Sable's **striped face** separates it from Green-faced Clubtails, while **unique marks** on the club and abdomen sides, combined with the female's **angled ovipositor**, differentiate Sables from Rapids.



I've only seen Sables three times (always between 3PM and 6PM), and only at the stream pictured. The males made short flights over shallow water, and perched frequently among tree roots, ferns and shrubs along the stream bank. The female (only ever found one) was perched low in a sunny, swampy clearing downstream, in the same area as several Cyrano Darners and Great Blue Skimmers. Sables appears to prefer small, relatively clean, shallow and stable forest streams, with plenty of low vegetation and a gentle flow.