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

**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

**Male’s side has small dots**

**Female has unique, angled ovipositor**

**Striped face**

**Female’s side has dot-dash pattern**
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 down-stream, 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.