

# Stream Cruiser



**Stream Cruiser (*Didymops transversa*) – 2.2", 56-60 mm**

**Habitat Conservation Alert!**

**Flight Record:**  
(4/09-5/29)  
Peaks  
mid-April to  
mid-May.

*Uncommon*

**Habitat:**  
Clean,  
forested  
streams w/  
sunny  
sections.

**First Glance:**  
Medium &  
thin. light  
brown w/  
pale marks.  
Flies low &  
fast over  
streams &  
meadows.  
Perches  
often on  
stems of  
low  
vegetation,  
& in trees.

**Compare:**  
Springtime  
Darner,  
Spiketails



Gray-  
brown  
eyes turn  
**greenish**  
w/ age.

Male's abdomen  
ends in a **club** –  
female's doesn't



Cruisers have **1 side stripe** on the thorax -  
Springtime Darners and Spiketails *have 2*

**Pale cerci** at tip  
of abdomen, and  
**long, thin legs** are  
shared by both sexes.  
Springtime Darners and  
Spiketails have  
*short, thick legs* and  
*dark cerci*.

### Notes from the field – Stream Cruiser:

This thinly-built, long-legged dragonfly of forest streams is one of the earliest species to appear each spring, just days after the Common Green Darner. Slender, brown, **fast**, and cruising over the water's surface, Stream Cruisers are found in early April, long before dragonflies become a common sight.

As you can see from both the picture to your right and the title page, those long legs result in a picturesque perching style. Twin-spotted and Brown Spiketails are *also* out and about in April and May around forest streams, and they too perch at an angle on low vegetation. However they have short, stubby legs. See their ID pages for other simple tips on how to tell them apart.

Another similar stream dragonfly of spring is the Springtime Darner. The best ways I've found of telling them apart are those bright white cerci (darners don't have 'em), clear wings (Springtime Darners often have an amber sheen), and the calendar – Stream Cruisers are gone by 6/1, while Springtime Darners can be found into June.

Stream Cruisers are habitat specialists. Look for them in stable, small to medium, forest streams, with good flow and rocks. The best place to find them is hunting in sunlit meadows near their woodland waterways. Riverbend Park, Sully Woodlands and Prince William Forest Park are all excellent sites.



My favorite Stream Cruiser memory is from just such a meadow. It was late April and I was in a great riverside meadow, between the Potomac River and a hilly forest full of clean, small streams. I was watching a lazy swarm of feeding Springtime Darners, when something much faster sped by, its long legs visibly full of something. I gave chase and netted a Stream Cruiser! Wrapped in his leggy embrace: a Pygmy Grasshopper *and* a large fly, an impressive spring catch.