

Darner family - *Aeshnidae*

First Glance:

*Large size, huge-eyed, long-bodied, clear wings, straight flight, rarely perches.
Can be dark or colorful.*

ID tips:

Flight – usually strong and straight

Hunting – aerial and gleaning from vegetation.

Perching – rarely: hangs from vegetation, or on tree trunks (Harlequin and Taper-tailed).

Body Type – huge head with eyes that touch, and a long, thin abdomen.

Wings – long and unpatterned, sometimes with amber tint.

Oviposting – insert/inject eggs directly into mud, debris or plant stems.

General Info:

Species in N. VA – 9 (all on website)

Size Range – 2.2-3.4"

N. VA Flight Period – March-November

Habitat Types – all (this family has both habitat generalists and specialists)

Notes:

- Swamp and Comet Darners are our two largest dragonflies, along with the Dragonhunter (clubtail family).
- Common Green Darners have the longest flight season of any N. VA dragonfly and are first to appear in spring. They are also marathon migrants, and have been known to cross the Atlantic Ocean.
- Fawn Darners have especially huge eyes for their crepuscular (evening) habits, and can be seen patrolling forest streams as late as 8:30PM.
- The uncommon and seldom seen Harlequin and Taper-tailed Darners are unusual for this family – they're smaller, darker and perch frequently, flat against sunny tree trunks. They are "Pygmy Darners", genus *Gomphaeschna*.



Common Green Darner



Common Green Darner
(eating a Springtime
Darner)

Darners:



Common Green Darners
(in tandem and ovipositing)



Common Green Darner
(juvenile)



Swamp Darner
(ovipositing)



Swamp Darner



Ed Eder



Fawn Darner

Shadow Darner



Gary Myers



Harlequin Darner

Harlequin
Darners



Springtime
Darner