

Cruiser family – *Macromiidae*

First Glance:

Large to medium size, abdomens are dark, long and thin with small clubs and light markings near the end. Often has bright green eyes. Very fast, powerful flights (up to 40 mph) up and down their rivers and streams (often rocky).

ID tips:

Flight – fast, straight, powerful, impressive.

Hunting – mostly aerial, sometimes gleaning, often high over meadows and old roads.

Perching – rarely: I've only seen a River Cruiser perching/hanging once (high in a tree).

Stream Cruisers perch slightly more often (at an angle), usually in forest clearings near their clean streams.

Body Type – large head, eyes that touch, long, very thin bodies with slight club.

Wings – long, thin and unpatterned

Oviposting – repeatedly taps water surface with abdomen tip.

General Info:

Species in N. VA – 3 (all on website). One additional species (Alleghany River Cruiser) and one sub-species (Georgia River Cruiser) are in range and may be present, but to my knowledge, have yet to be found in N. VA. See my Swift River Cruiser ID page to learn about these two additional dragonflies and the ID differences.

Size Range – 2.2-3.3"

N. VA Flight Period – April-September

Habitat Types – Flowing water of large sunny streams and shallow rivers, and sometimes in connected marshy bays.

Notes:

- Nothing moves quite like a Swift River Cruiser at it speeds up and down its river territories. Believed to be one of the world's fastest dragonflies, they can reach speeds of 40 mph.
- River Cruisers, like many dragonflies, can also be seen hunting high over sunny meadows, often at tree canopy heights.
- Stream Cruisers may be our earliest *resident* dragonfly, appearing in early April. Common Green Darners (CGDs) can be seen even earlier, but these are *migrants*, flying up from the Southeast. Our local CGDs don't emerge until May or later. Blue Corporals, Common Whitetails, Uhler's Sundragons and Common Baskettails are Northern VA's other early April residents.



Swift River Cruiser

Cruisers:



Stream Cruiser

Stream Cruiser



Royal River Cruiser