Brown Spiketail
(Juv)

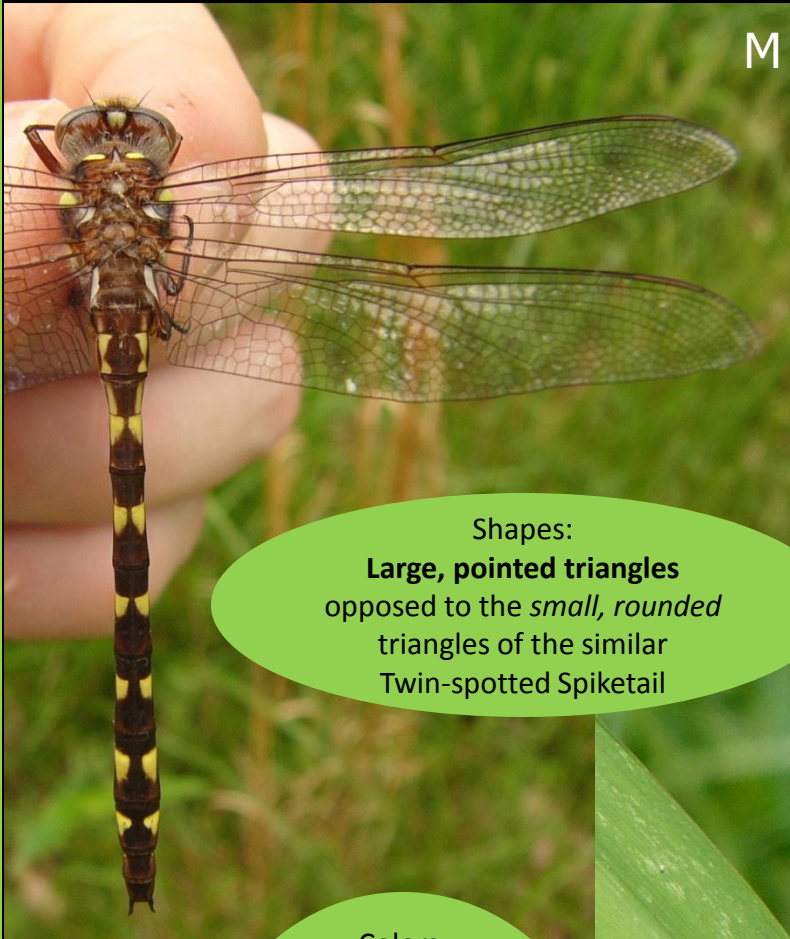Dragonflies of N. Va. – Kevin Munroe, 2012

Flight Record:
(4/29-6/15) Peaks mid-May.

Rare

Habitat:
Clean, small sunlit, forest streams & seepages.

First Glance:
Medium, thin, brown w/ light marks. Straight, fast patrols, low over stream. Perches often & low on grasses & shrubs, in clearings, meadow edges and sunny forest edges.

Simliar:
Twin-spotted Spiketail

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Shapes:
Large, pointed triangles opposed to the *small, rounded* triangles of the similar Twin-spotted Spiketail

Eyes:
grayish blue, turning gray & **aqua-blue** with age, opposed to the gray & *green* eyes of the Twin-spotted
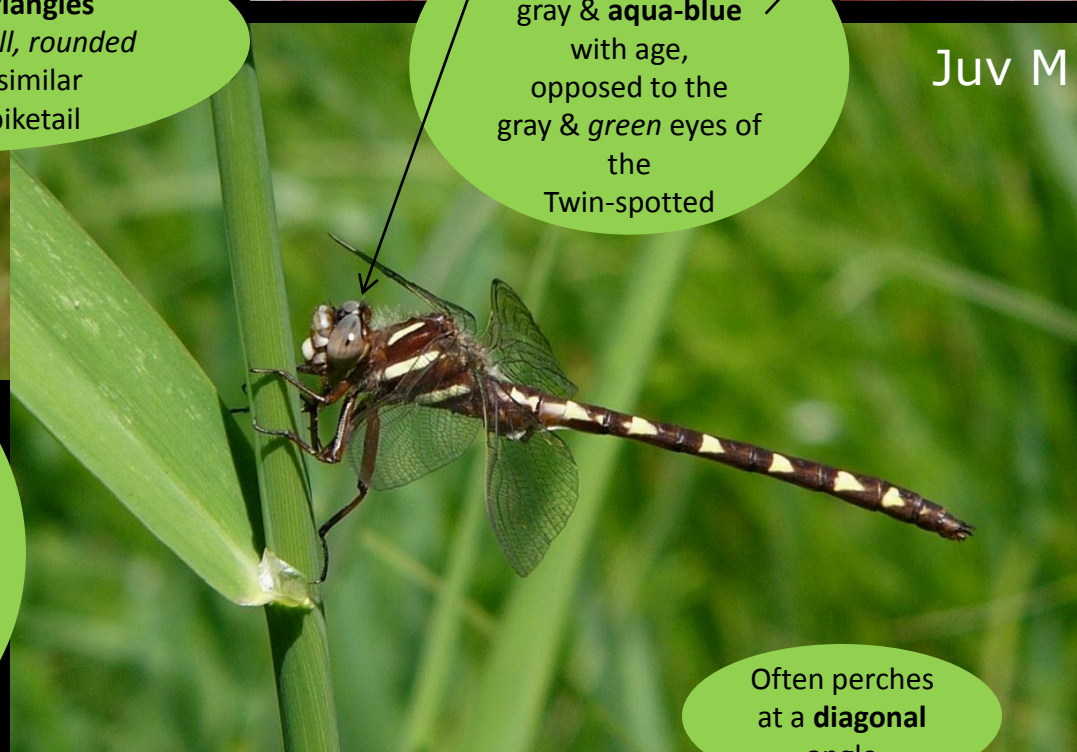
Colors:
Pale yellow to white markings on a **light brown** abdomen, opposed to the *bright yellow* marks and *blackish brown* abdomen of the Twin-spotted Spiketail

Often perches at a **diagonal** angle

Notes from the field – Brown Spiketail:

This may be the most local of Northern Virginia's four spiketails – thriving at a few select sites, but absent from most of our area. It's also the least brightly colored, with rather pale marks compared to its boldly-marked cousins. Pale as it may be, it appears to prefer bright environs more than other spiketails – each time I've seen this species it's been in an open meadow. My first, second and third sightings were all in the meadow photographed below, as well as the hilly fields behind. My friends and I found a beautiful mature male, with bi-colored aqua gray eyes, on an overcast June afternoon. He was perched in this riverside meadow, surrounded by stream-filled forest. When I returned the next May, I found half a dozen males and females mating, hunting and basking throughout this sunny meadow, mid-morning to mid-afternoon. They flew low over the grass, and perched repeatedly with that characteristic, angled pose.

This meadow is in fact on top of a utility, and it was on *another* utility easement where I found a second healthy population of Brown Spiketails. The second was a power-line easement

meadow in Prince William Forest Park, literally surrounded by small forest streams and seepages. Tiny, spring-fed, headwater streams, and boggy, flowing seepages are their aquatic haunts. Usually in a sunny forest clearing, or the edge of a marshy meadow. They've also been found at Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship and, although I've never surveyed Hemlock Overlook Park, that site also appears to have great spiketail habitat.

Compare to the similar Twin-spotted Spiketail for ID tips – good luck!