

Lancet Clubtail



Lancet Clubtail (*Gomphus exilis*) – 1.7", 39-48 mm

Flight Record:

(5/11-7/06)

Peaks in late
May thru June

*Uncommon
to Fairly
Common*

Habitat:

Sunny, marshy
streams and
small stream-
fed ponds.

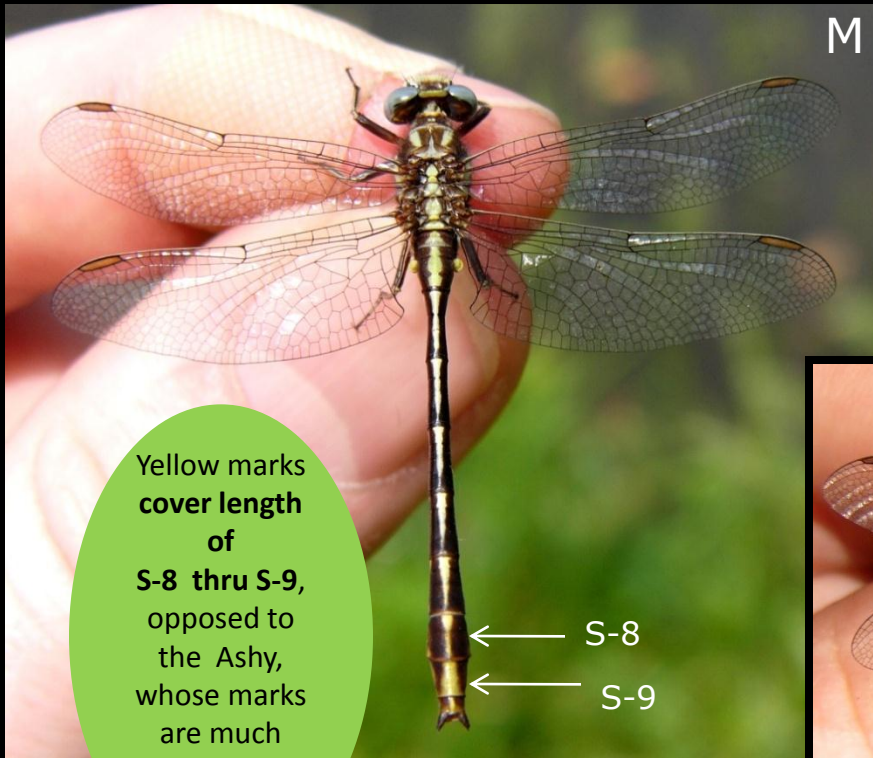
First Glance:

Small, thin,
brown
dragonfly with
yellow marks.
Yellow on side
of male
abdomen tip
often visible.

Patrols low
along water's
edge. Often
flies in loops
when on land.
Perches often,
on
ground/logs.

Compare:

Ashy Clubtail,
Sable Clubtail



M

Both sexes
have
blue eyes.



F

M



Noticeable **bright
yellow flange** on sides
of S-8 & S-9 (male and
female), while Ashy has
almost no flange, and
less bright yellow

Notes from the field – Lancet Clubtail:

I spent several years looking for this species along rivers, and only ever found one. Shady forest streams didn't reveal any Lancets either. I eventually stumbled upon several healthy populations of Lancet Clubtails around slow, sunny sections of streams and adjoining stream-fed small, shallow ponds. They appear to do very well in stable, sluggish, sunlit streams with marshy banks, emergent vegetation and pond-like backwaters.

The Bull Run, Popes Head and Cub Run watersheds all have what this species needs. Spend a May or June afternoon walking the sunnier streams at Manassas Battlefield Park or Sully Woodlands, and you've got a good chance of spotting this small clubtail. Look for them flitting along stream banks and landing flat on logs, pathways and in-stream debris.

Like their similar cousin, the Ashy Clubtail, Lancets often fly in a **series of loops**, possibly as a means of confusing would-be predators. This behavior is a good way to recognize these two species. To tell them apart, see the ID tips listed on the pages of both species, especially "Notes from the field" for the Ashy.

Bring your camera – once they've perched, they are relatively tame and easy to approach.



Even from a distance, you can get a sense of the **yellow abdomen flange**. This is an important field mark, as it separates Lancets from the similar Ashy Clubtail. Lancets also have bluer eyes, brighter markings, and prefer slower, sunnier waters than Ashies.

