

Mocha Emerald



Mocha Emerald (*Somatochlora linearis*) – 2.6", 58-68 mm

Flight Record:
(6/16-9/16)
Peaks
July-August

Fairly Common

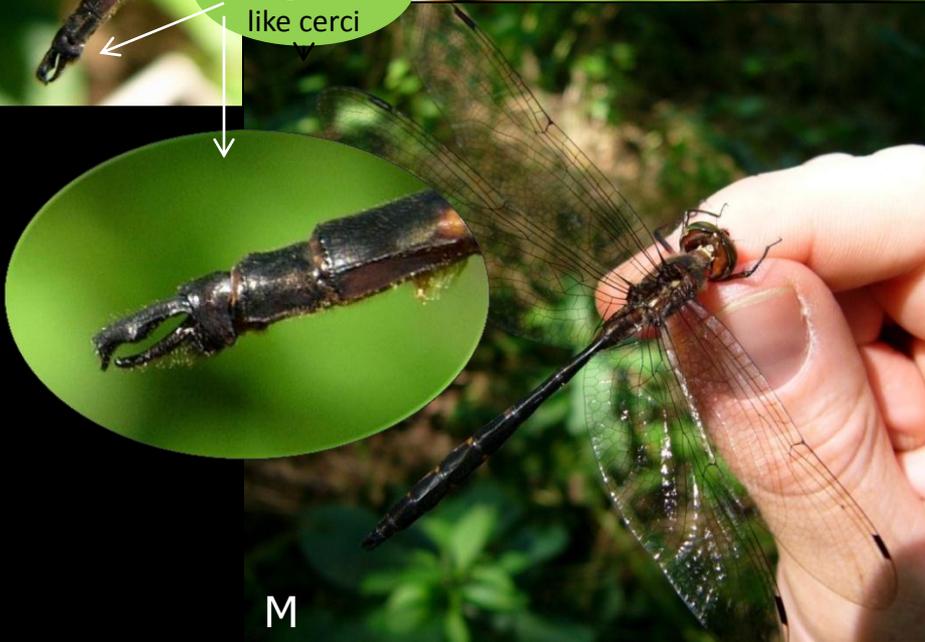
Habitat:
Small, shallow
forest
streams.

First Glance:
Large, thin,
dark.
Darner-like.
Female wings
have amber
tint. Flies
high over
fields, & low
over
streams.
Males hover
repeatedly
over small
streams.
Perches/hang
on low plants
near
streams.

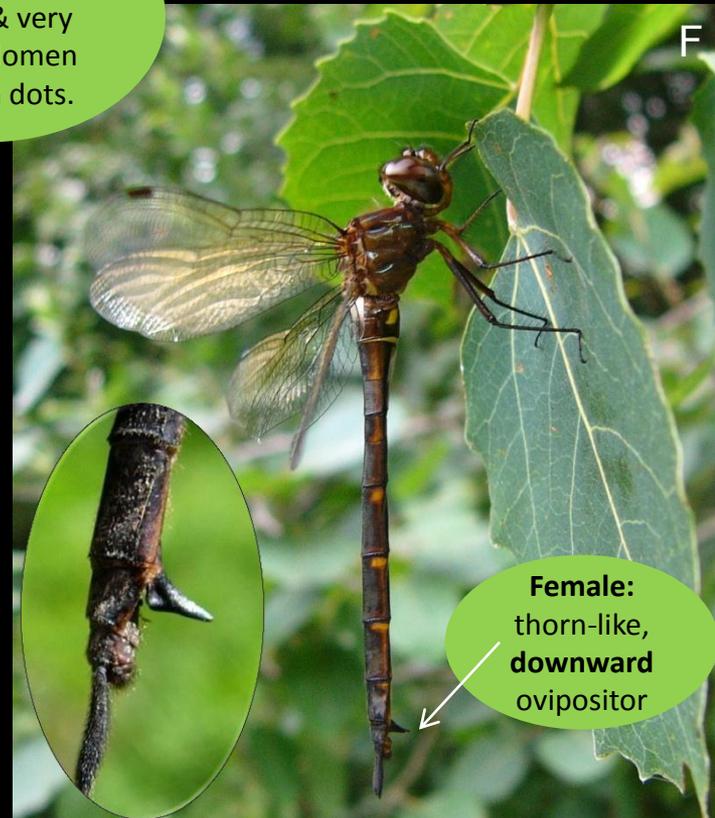
Compare:
Clamp-tipped
& Fine-lined
Emeralds



Male:
alligator-
like cerci



Both sexes:
no stripes on
thorax & very
thin abdomen
with tan dots.



Female:
thorn-like,
downward
ovipositor

Notes from the field – Mocha Emerald:

This is our largest member of the genus *Somatochlora*, often called Striped Emeralds because of the light stripes on their thorax sides. Ironically, this largest member of the Striped Emerald genus has no stripes! The Mocha's most distinguishing characteristic is its solidly-colored thorax – this separates it from all other *Somatochlores*. In addition, that large size and their long, thin shape, make them appear almost damner-like, especially when hunting high over a meadow or ballfield (look for amber-tinted wings on females).

When their not hunting over forest clearings, wood-edges and fields, you can find them patrolling small forest streams. Look for shallow (usually less than a foot), partly shady streams with a noticeable, but gentle flow. Braided swampy streams with no rocks, and single-stem rocky streams, appear to be equally attractive – shallow, stable, forested, and a modest flow seem to be the crucial ingredients.

The behavior of male Mochas on territory is fun to watch. They make constant patrols over their small streams, interspersed every few yards with sustained periods of hovering: fly a few yards, stop and hover, fly a few yards, stop and hover – all the time flashing those brilliant green eyes. They also stop to perch quite often, perhaps worn-out by all that hovering. They'll hang on exposed tree roots, shrub branches or other low vegetation along their stream banks.



Clamp-tipped Emeralds are in the same genus and are quite similar. To tell the two species apart, compare the field-marks discussed on their ID pages, and see “Notes from the field” under Clamp-tipped Emeralds for a more detailed discussion.

Great sites to see Mochas include Huntley Meadows Park, Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Manassas Park.

A photograph of a stream flowing through a dense forest. The water is clear and shallow, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The streambed is covered with numerous dark, flat rocks of various sizes, many of which are covered in moss. The banks are lined with lush green vegetation, including tall grasses and various shrubs. The trees in the background are tall and thin, with their leaves creating a canopy overhead. The overall scene is a peaceful, natural setting.

Although Mochas
can also be common
in completely rockless streams,
I've probably seen more
Mochas here than at any other site.