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.
Darners-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

Perches/hang on low plants near streams.
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 it’s solidly-colored thorax – this separates it from all other *Somatochloras*. In addition, that large size and their long, thin shape, make them appear almost darner-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.
Although Mochas can also be common in completely rockless streams, I've probably seen more Mochas here than at any other site.