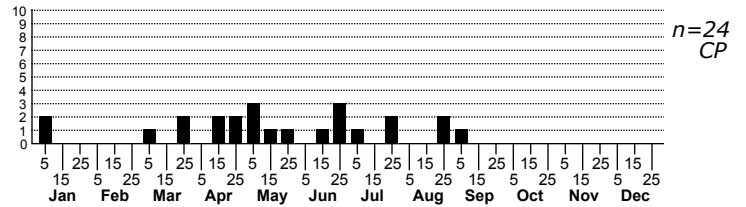
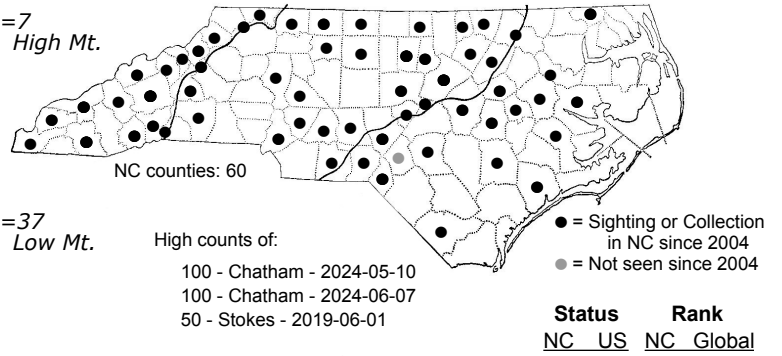
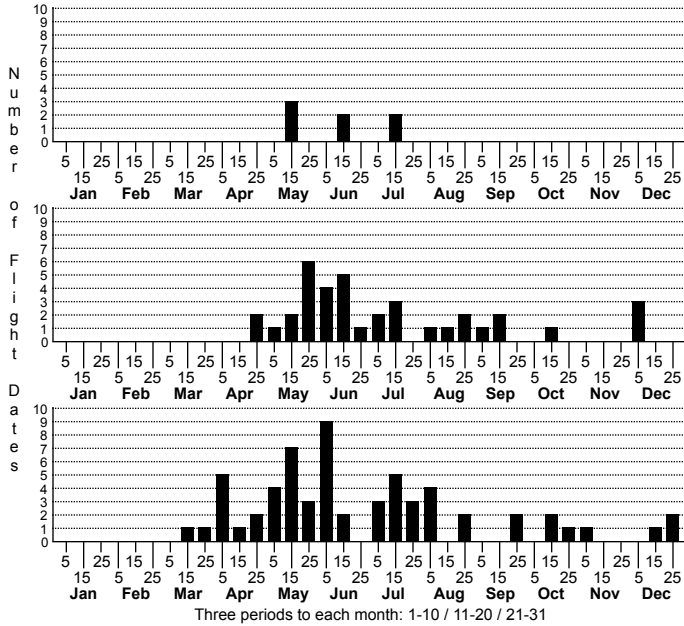


*Leucauge venusta* orchard orbweaver



ORDER:ARANEAE INFRAORDER:Araneomorphae  
FAMILY:Tetragnathidae

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: The type for this species, *Linyphia* (*Leucauge*) *argyroabapta* White, 1841, was based on a specimen collected by Charles Darwin (the only spider he's known to have documented!) during the voyage of the H.M.S. Beagle, which specimen was subsequently lost after publication of its description.

A neotype was not established until 2010 when one based on specimens collected in the type locality was established. At that time, *L. venusta* was declared a senior synonym of *L. argyroabapta*, but in 2018, *argyroabapta* was removed from that synonymy, and is now recognized as a separate species. These two species are grossly differentiated by geographic range (*venusta* is more northern and found in temperate climates, while *argyroabapta* is typically more tropical and coastal).

Although there may be some generalized marking difference, more precise determination requires microscopic examination of the genitalia. "Surprisingly," according to Ballesterosa and Hormiga, 2018, these are not sister species, as their "estimated age of divergence implies that the morphologies in this two species...have remained seemingly invariable for at least 10 million years.

FLD\_GUIDE\_DESCRIPTIONS: The prosoma is light brown with a dark median stripe. The opisthosoma is silver white and has a pattern of dark lines and yellow to orange spots. The dorsal opisthosoma has a dark central line and two lateral lines that run parallel the entire length. Some smaller diagonal lines connect the lateral lines to the central lines. There is often yellow shading within this area and, sometimes, yellow or orange spots near the posterior. The ventral opisthosoma is dark, with a copper-orange crescent-shaped marking (which in some cases is yellow). (Rose, 2022)

DISTRIBUTION\_COMMENTS: Found in all US coastal states, with scattered distribution between the east and west coasts. Widely found in NC.

HABITAT: Shrubby meadows, forest edge, urban and suburban settings (Rose, 2022).