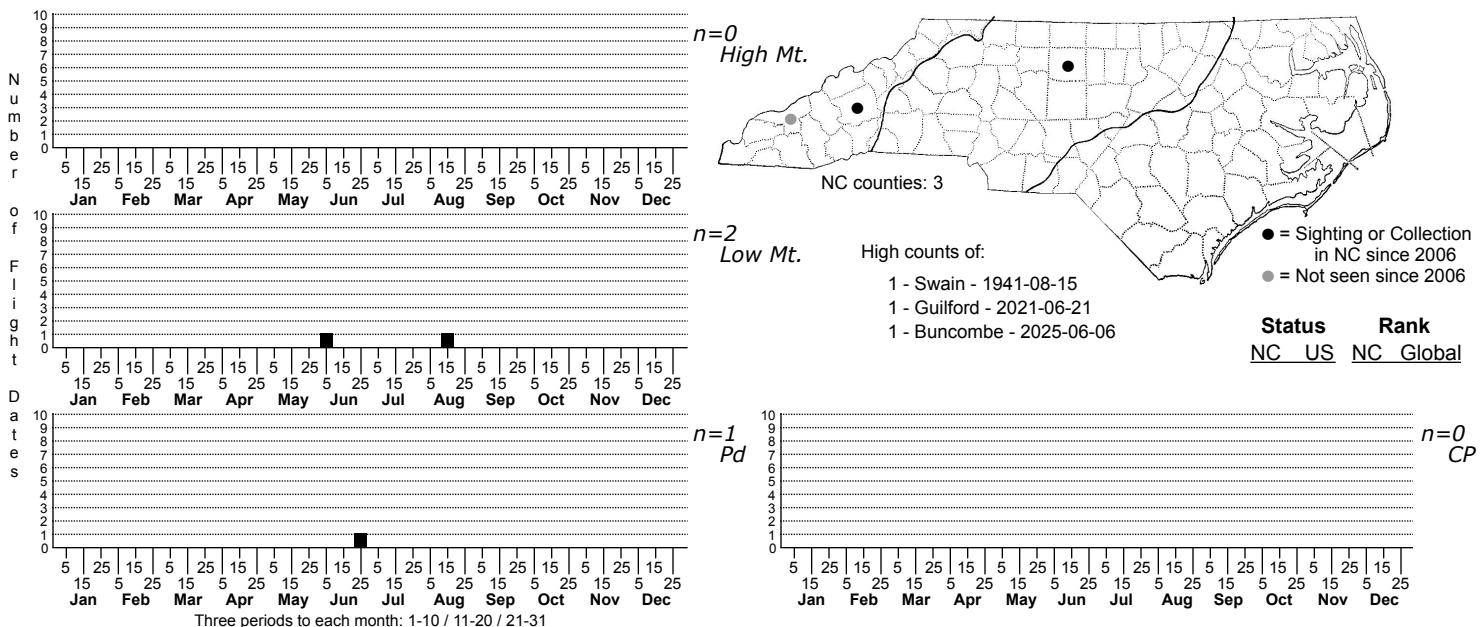


Synanthedon richardsi Richard's Clearwing



FAMILY: Sesiidae SUBFAMILY: Sesiinae TRIBE: Synanthedonini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: North America has 136 or more species in the family Sesiidae, and the large genus *Synanthedon* constitutes around half of the 37 species found in North Carolina, many being similar in appearance to one another. Some sesiids, known broadly as clearwing borers, are significant pests of commercial crops. Almost all are mimics of wasps and hornets.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Eichlin and Duckworth (1988)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description of the male is based on those by Engelhardt (1946) and Eichlin and Duckworth (1988). The antenna is black with the apical one-half to one-third powdered with white or yellowish-white except for the black tip. The labial palp is yellow with some brownish-black apically. The head is black and the face glossy white, while the collar is pale yellow and slightly mixed with black above. The thorax is black, with the patagia along the sides narrowly touched with pale yellow inwardly. The abdomen is black and unbanded, and the anal tuft black above and sometimes mixed with orange or orangish-red scales basally. The anal tuft is long, narrow, and black with a pencil-like extension from the middle. The forewing is transparent, with the costa, veins, and large oblong discal mark black. The outer margin is broadly shaded with black, with black on the veins, and orange between the veins. The hindwing is transparent and narrowly margined with black. The legs are predominantly pale yellow and shaded with black scales. The tibia of the hindleg is very rough and golden yellow, while the tarsi are smooth, yellow, and shaded with black.

The female is generally similar to the male, but has more prominent white shading on the antenna before the black tips, along with an anal tuft that is short, rounded, and orange. The forewing has the outer margin broader and a brighter orange, and the abdomen has a conspicuous yellow band on segment 4.

DISTRIBUTION: *Synanthedon richardsi* appears to be a relatively rare *Synanthedon* with scattered records from New York, Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey southwestward through the Appalachian region and Piedmont to South Carolina and Georgia. Isolated records are also known from northern Florida, central Kentucky, Kansas and southern Ohio. As of 2024, we have only two records, with one each from the Piedmont and Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from May, June, July and October in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak in June. As of 2024, our two records are from late-June and mid-August.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats are poorly documented.

FOOD: As of 2024, the host plants are undocumented.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are diurnally active and are occasionally seen perched on vegetation or nectaring on flowers.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR[S1S2]

STATE PROTECTION: Has no legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: This appears to be a relatively rare species throughout its range, including in North Carolina where we have only one recent record. More information is needed on its host plants and preferred habitats.