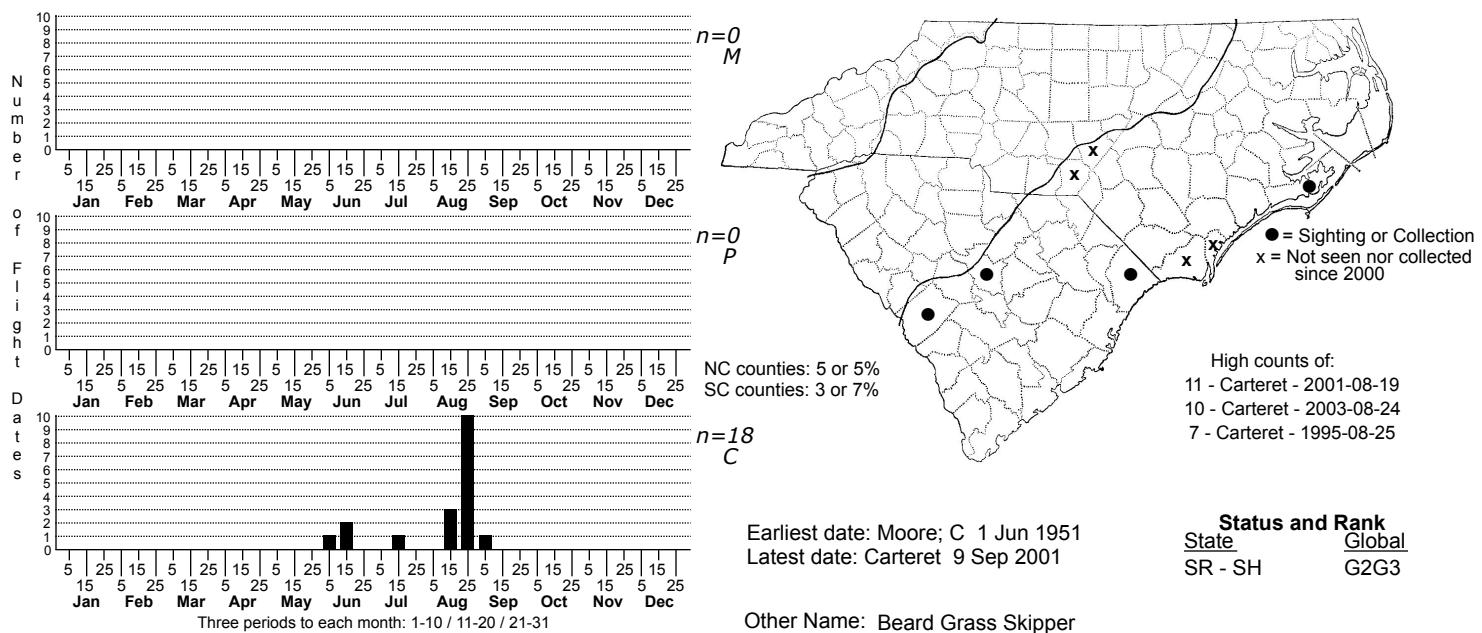


Arogos Skipper *Atrytone arogos*



DISTRIBUTION: Now of historical occurrence. Restricted to the Coastal Plain, with known records only from the southern half; thus far, recorded only (historically) from the Sandhills (Moore and Richmond counties) and the southeastern Coastal Plain (Brunswick, New Hanover, and Carteret).

ABUNDANCE: Until about 2009, very rare and local in savannas, and exceedingly rare in other grassy areas near or under Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*). Essentially was absent in the Coastal Plain away from Longleaf Pine regions. This species is on the verge of extirpation in the Eastern States, except in FL; however, it still is present in NJ and in a few Gulf Coast states (in addition to FL). Unfortunately, it has not been re-discovered at its last known site in NC in Carteret County, despite intensive search; it is now considered to be historical in the state.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Two broods; late May or mainly early June to late June, and early or mid-August to early September; more data needed, especially for the first brood.

HABITAT: This is a species of relatively undisturbed grasslands. It is a prairie species for the most part; in the East it occurs in serpentine barrens and open Longleaf Pine grasslands such as savannas and flatwoods. In NC, it has been found mostly in savannas and very open flatwoods, with considerable bluestems (*Schizachyrium* spp.) and broomsedges (*Andropogon* spp.). Frequent fire is important in maintaining the herbaceous vegetation.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The major foodplant of the species elsewhere is believed to be Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and other bluegrasses and broomsedges. However, Dale Schweitzer (pers. comm. to Steve Hall) believes that the relatively rare grass Pinebarren Sandreed (*Calamovilfa brevipilis*) is a foodplant in NJ and NC. The species nectars on many flowers, such as thistles (*Cirsium* spp.). The 1994 sighting of two individuals by Steve Hall and Bo Sullivan was made at a pine savanna, where the butterflies were nectaring on Venus Flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*)!

COMMENTS: This species has a very disjunct range, mainly now in FL, with mostly former scattered populations in GA, SC, NC, and NJ; its main range is the Southern Plains. It is globally very rare, with a Global Rank of G2G3. Bo Sullivan, who had experience with the species in NC, found it within a year after burning of savannas, but seldom after the savannas had gone unburned for several years. Obviously, the extensive natural fires, and perhaps grazing by large mammals, in pre-settlement times provided extensive grasslands in the East for this species. Such is no longer the case. Observers should look for the species mostly in savannas or flatwoods that have a thick grass/forb cover and have been burned within the past year.

A concerted effort by at least one-half dozen people at its only known "current" site on the annual Croatan National Forest butterfly count failed to find the species in 2007. The count in 2008 turned up only one individual. Unfortunately, an untimely wildfire and man-made backfire occurred in southern Croatan National Forest around August 1, 2009, charring the only currently known site. The timing was bad because the species is not on the wing in early August, and thus most or all larvae or pupae were likely killed. Not surprisingly, no adults were seen in late August 2009, and none were again seen on the butterfly counts in 2010, 2012, and 2013. The NC Natural Heritage Program now considers it to be of historical occurrence, though it could be discovered somewhere else in the Coastal Plain, if not again in Croatan National Forest; it is a very small and easily overlooked species and the main foodplant is not overly rare in NC. Also, because it can easily be confused with other species, such as the Delaware Skipper, Swarthy Skipper, Crossline Skipper, or Tawny-edged Skipper, future NC records should be documented with photos.