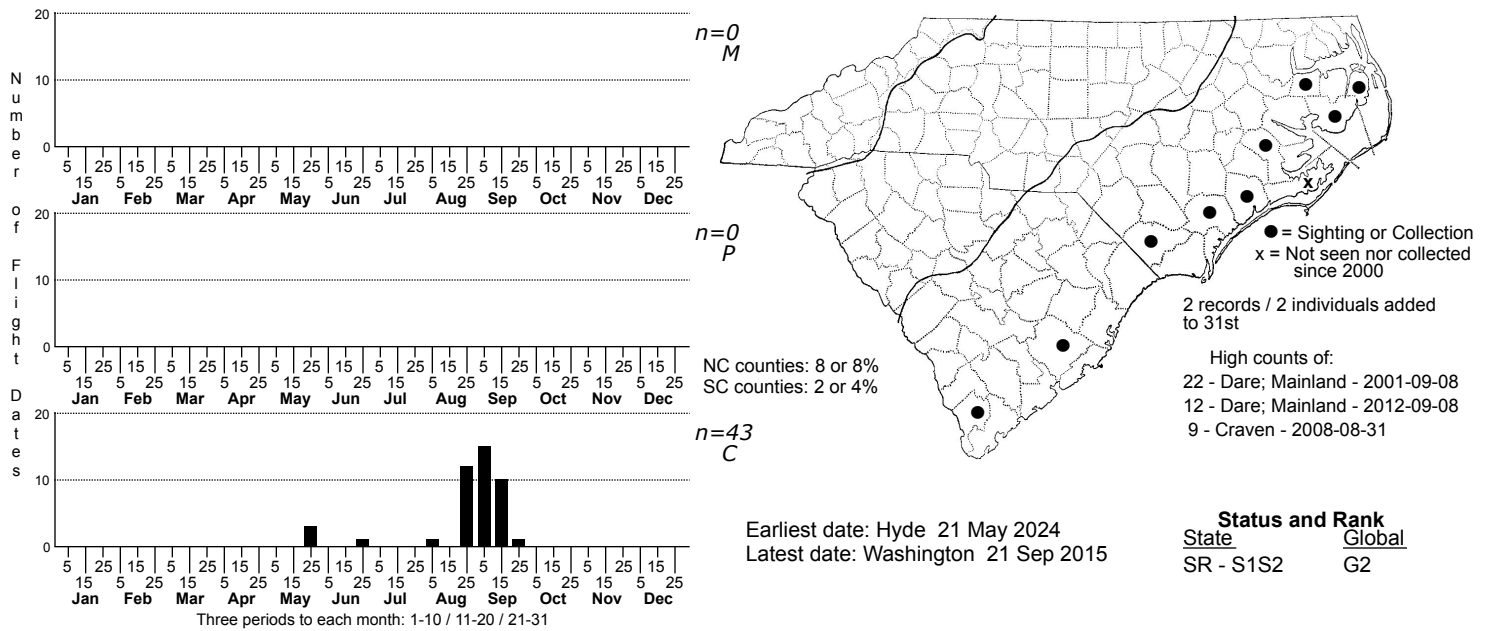


Berry's Skipper *Euphyes berryi*



DISTRIBUTION: Found at scattered sites in the lower Coastal Plain north to Albemarle Sound, generally within 50 miles of the coast. New records for Onslow County in 2017 and in Pender County in 2018 fill in former gaps in the range. The species still has not been found in Brunswick County, which has seemingly much suitable habitat for it.

ABUNDANCE: Very rare to locally rare. NC lies at the northern edge of the species' range, but even within the range it is one of the scarcest butterflies in the Southeast.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Two broods, but the flight period -- at least the first brood -- is somewhat confusing. Seemingly a small brood from late May to late June [only two records for this first brood], and a much larger brood from late August to late September. An August 10 record is an anomaly, likely from the first brood, as the individual was a worn female. Much more data are needed to solve this confusing pattern.

HABITAT: This is wetland skipper, of open and sunny situations. It occurs in wet to moist powerline clearings with savanna vegetation, edges of canals and ditches with marshy vegetation, and other similar wet spots. However, it is seldom found in pine savannas (at least not yet), nor is it found in open marshes. As there are still relatively few sites known in the state for it, more elucidation of its habitat preferences is needed.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplants are sedges; Will Cook photographed a female ovipositing on an unidentified sedge (*Carex* sp.) in Croatan National Forest. The species has a strong affinity for nectaring at Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) in FL. The butterflies at Dare/Hyde most frequently nectar on Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*); those in Craven County favor Dense Blazing-star (*Liatris spicata*).

COMMENTS: The Carteret County record is for 1991, but the species has not been seen there since. Bo Sullivan found the species a few years later in Craven County, and it has been found at this same Craven site in several more recent years, including an excellent count of nine individuals in 2008. Jeff Phippen and I found a moderate-sized colony in the Dare/Hyde County area in September 1997, where now seen regularly in September. Quite gratifying was the observation of three individuals by Brian Bockhahn just south of Lake Phelps on September 8, 2013; his photos were carefully reviewed by experts and confirmed as Berry's. Additional records came from this latter site in fall 2014 and in 2017. A new site, at a powerline clearing with savanna vegetation, was found in Onslow County in 2017 by Ed Corey and Salman Abdulali; and Derb Carter found the species in Holly Shelter Game Land in Pender County in 2018. Owing to a handful of new sites found for it in recent years, the State Rank has now been moved from S1 to now S1S2.

In the field, Berry's Skipper is slightly smaller than Dion Skipper and is unicolored below on the hind wing, mostly an orange-brown or copper-brown with somewhat paler veins. Even though Dion -- a habitat associate -- has one or two broad yellow rays (which may be obscure) on the hind wing and is rather orange below, a Berry's may look like a Dion without the rays. Researchers in SC have found that some female Byssus Skippers there, at least at one to several locales, lack any pale patch/chevron on the under hind wing; they can thus be confused with Berry's Skipper. Whether any "Berry's Skipper" reports from NC are actually Byssus Skippers is not known, though this situation needs further study in NC. Careful review of all known NC Berry's Skipper photos on websites seem to clearly rule out Byssus Skipper, especially as Byssus Skippers from the same general area in the Croatan National Forest, also fresh in late August, clearly show a pale and broad hind wing chevron or patch, and somewhat different fore wing markings.