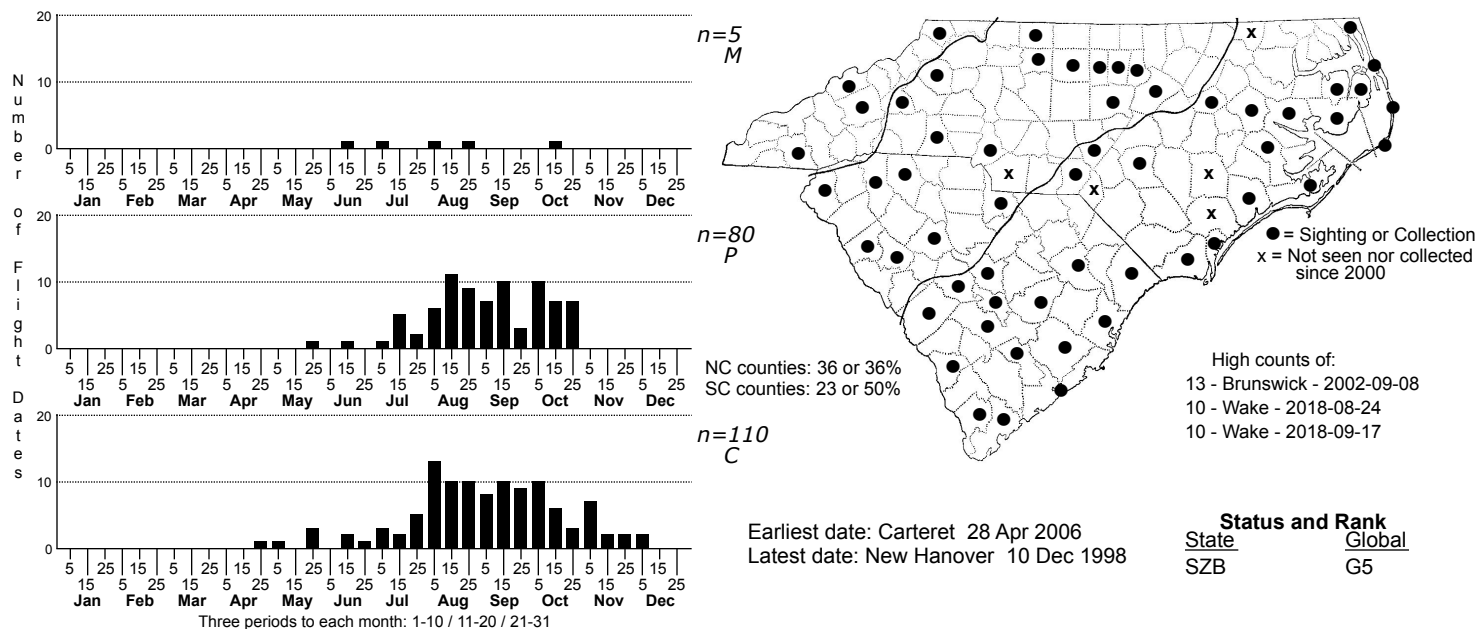


Brazilian Skipper *Calpodus ethlius*



DISTRIBUTION: Primarily a migrant from farther south, but which oviposits in the state and produces one or two additional broods in late summer and fall. Normally found mainly in the coastal counties and sparingly inland. However, in 2020, reports of adults came from across most of the state, with a remarkable eight new county records -- three in the Mountains, four in the Piedmont, and one in the Coastal Plain. Though the range map now appears to show that it has a roughly statewide range, it is still mostly a species of the Coastal Plain and lower Piedmont, and can be very rare in some years; and it must re-populate the state from the south each year, as its progeny do not survive our winters.

ABUNDANCE: Rare, but somewhat erratic in numbers from year to year. In most years, a few are reported, but a population boom in the Eastern United States was noted in 2018 and a remarkable 40 records were made in NC in that year; another boom year came in 2020. As might be expected for a southern migrant, it is more frequently reported from the extreme southern coast (Brunswick and New Hanover counties) than elsewhere.

FLIGHT PERIOD: This migrant occurs mostly in late summer and fall, from mid-July to early December. Quite amazing was an individual photographed on April 28, 2006, by Randy Newman; this is our first spring record. The Ashe County sighting was on July 10, one of the earliest records in the state. In 2018, enough adults had emerged in some areas by July that one or two additional broods were noted; for example, at the Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, there was a strong brood of adults in August, and another brood of fresh adults was seen in October.

HABITAT: This species is found in the usual places for southern migrants -- weedy fields, roadsides, gardens, and other sunny and disturbed places. Stands of cannas (*Canna* spp.) are the best places to look for the species; as these plants are not native to NC, residential areas, golf courses, nurseries, arboreta, etc., that have canna patches are additional places to search.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplants are well known to be robust herbs in the canna family (*Cannaceae*). The adults nectar on many flowers; males often patrol stands of canna when in bloom.

COMMENTS: This is a large, robust species that can scarcely be confused (except in flight for Silver-spotted Skipper owing to very large size). Some, or perhaps most, of the individuals seen in NC have been fresh. They might have come from eggs laid in the state. Obviously, complete details of the flight period and life history of the species are not well known in NC. Some of the records are based on caterpillars found on cannas. In fact, searching for caterpillars is the easiest way to document the presence of the species, and the 2003 records for Durham, Orange and Scotland counties are based on such larval records. John Dole's report of five adults flying around canna stands at a nursery in Wake County in August 2002 was the precursor of a good fall season. Jeff Pippen and I, while scanning mostly Lantanas (*Lantana strigocamara*) at a golf course near Sunset Beach for Southern strays, stumbled onto adult Brazilian Skippers "guarding" most sizable stands of canna along the roadsides, in September 2002. Our count of 13 adults has been the highest count reported in NC. Jamie Cameron made a remarkable discovery of an adult seen at a garden at Lake James State Park in McDowell County on August 24, 2012. Unfortunately, no adult Brazilian Skippers were reported in the state in 2013. Thankfully, despite a very poor year for migrant species (in general), there were 11 reports of adults in 2014, including three reports from the Piedmont. Also, 2016 was a rather good year for them, with nine reports, from both the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. As mentioned above, there were an amazing 40 reports in the state in NC in 2018, which amounted to nearly half of all previous state reports (93) through 2017! In 2020, in addition to the eight new county records, there was a total of 39 records for that year. There were very few reports of adults in both 2022 and 2023, sadly. Of the ten reports in 2024, half came from Dare County (and mostly from Nags Head north to Duck on the Outer Banks).