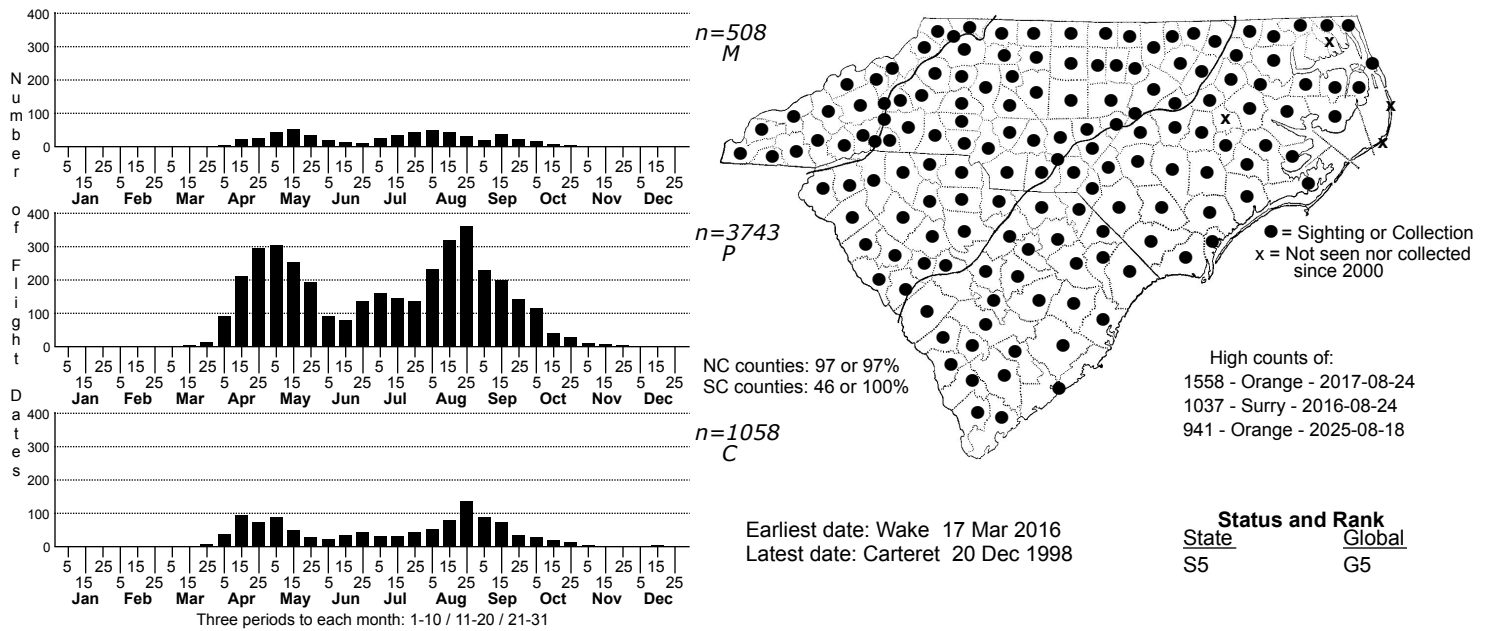


# Carolina Satyr *Hermeuptychia sosybius*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Statewide, and likely occurs in all 100 counties. However, in the Mountains, limited mostly to the lower elevations, primarily in the southern half of the Mountains. Both this species and the Gemmed Satyr can be said to have a statewide range, but the Gemmed Satyr lacks records for many Coastal Plain counties (though is presumed to occur in all of them).

**ABUNDANCE:** Common to often abundant in the central and western Piedmont, but only common in the eastern Piedmont and Coastal Plain -- subject to flooding events, which greatly impact numbers in the eastern half of the state (especially since 2016). Can be uncommon to only fairly common in the eastern parts a year following severe flooding. Fairly common to locally common in the lower Mountains. This is one of the most often seen butterflies in the dappled shade of hardwood forests and along forest trails. Seems to have greatly increased across the state since about 2005, perhaps owing to their usage of the ever-increasing exotic Japanese Stilt-grass (*Microstegium vimineum*) for a foodplant. Note that the peak daily totals, all from NABA butterfly counts, have occurred since 2016, but only in the western half of the state. In the last century, it likely was more common in the Coastal Plain than in the central and western Piedmont.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Three broods. Flight periods downstate are from very late March to early June, early June to early August, and early August to late October. In the Mountains the gaps are in mid-June and in late August or early September, about two weeks later than downstate. As with the Gemmed Satyr, the middle brood is the least common.

**HABITAT:** Widespread in hardwood or mixed forests, especially wetter ones that are somewhat open or have trails. As with the Gemmed, the Carolina favors woods with considerable grasses, such as those along trails and wooded edges. It also can be found in flatwoods, open swamps, and many other forests and edges. It is common in sewerline clearings through bottomlands.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** Various grasses are the foodplants, especially those growing in shade. The species now uses the invasive, exotic Japanese Stilt-grass as a foodplant, perhaps exclusively so in some areas. Although I have seen a few of them nectaring, the species generally feeds at carrion, sap, fruits, moisture, etc.

**COMMENTS:** Both the Carolina Satyr and the Gemmed Satyr have a bouncing flight near the forest floor, especially along trails, sewerline clearings, and edges of dirt roads. Their flight seldom takes them more than a foot off the ground. In flight the Carolina Satyr is slightly darker brown and smaller than the Gemmed Satyr and is about five times more common than the Gemmed in most areas. The recently described Intricate Satyr is extremely similar to Carolina Satyr; see that species account for distinctions.

Hurricanes Matthew (2016), Florence (2018), and to a lesser extent Michael (2018), along with other strong storms, have damaged the populations of Carolina Satyrs and many wetland skippers in the past few years. Many cities, towns, and counties in the state had record rainfall in 2018, with Wilmington and Morehead City surpassing 100 inches of rain. It may take a few years of normal to below normal rainfall for these species to return to former population levels, especially in the lower Coastal Plain.