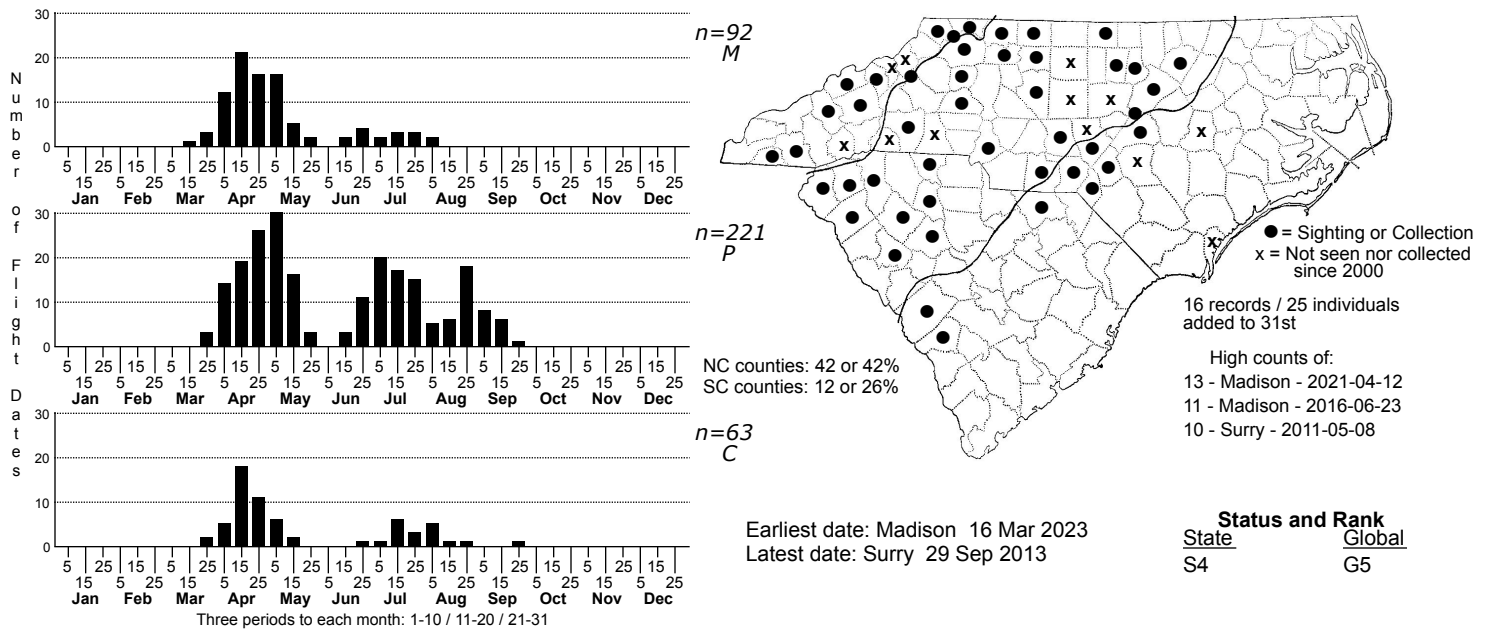


Common Roadside-Skipper *Amblyscirtes vialis*



DISTRIBUTION: Scattered over the Mountains, Piedmont, and the Sandhills portion of the Coastal Plain, with an isolated old record for New Hanover County (if correctly identified). The range extends east to Wayne and Cumberland counties, plus the New Hanover record; nearly all records from the Coastal Plain are from the Sandhills region.

ABUNDANCE: Rare to uncommon, and easily overlooked, in most parts of the Mountains, Piedmont, and the Sandhills portion of the Coastal plain. Accidental in the southeastern corner of the state (if a valid record), and apparently absent over most of the Coastal Plain. Unlike some of the other roadside-skipper, this species does not occur in colonies, though modest numbers have been seen in recent years at Pilot Mountain State Park (Surry County) and at low elevations in Madison County, where a then state record count of 11 was made in 2016, topped by a one-day count of 13 in 2021.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Three broods in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, but apparently just two in the Mountains. Flights in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain are from late March to mid-or late May, mid-June to early August, and mid- or late August to mid-September. The first brood seems to be the largest. In the Mountains, the spring brood is the larger of the two; broods appear from late March or early April to late May, and mid-June to early August.

HABITAT: This species has a potentially wide range of partly open to semi-wooded habitats. It is mostly found in openings in mesic hardwood forests, or in powerline clearings near hardwoods. It is most often seen on the ground on dirt roads through woods or in powerline clearings near woods. Unlike most other roadside-skipper, it shows little or no affinity for wetlands; it may be seen in the same habitats as the Pepper and Salt Skipper.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplants are various native grasses. The species does not nectar often, or at least not as often as most other skipper. Low blue flowers are favored (Opler and Krizek 1984).

COMMENTS: This is a very small, blackish skipper that perches on dirt or bare ground more often than on flowers. It keeps low to the ground and can be difficult to follow when on the wing because of its small size. Though this is a very widespread species in North America, and is common in many places in the Midwest, it is rare to uncommon everywhere in Eastern North America (and not just in NC). Detailed observations by Paul Hart at Raven Rock State Park and Gene Schepker at Pilot Mountain State Park, in particular, have been very helpful in elucidating the flight periods. Until a few years ago, we assumed that there were just two broods in the state, but there is clearly a third. Flight data collected by Richard Anderson at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty) also suggest three broods at that Sandhills locale.