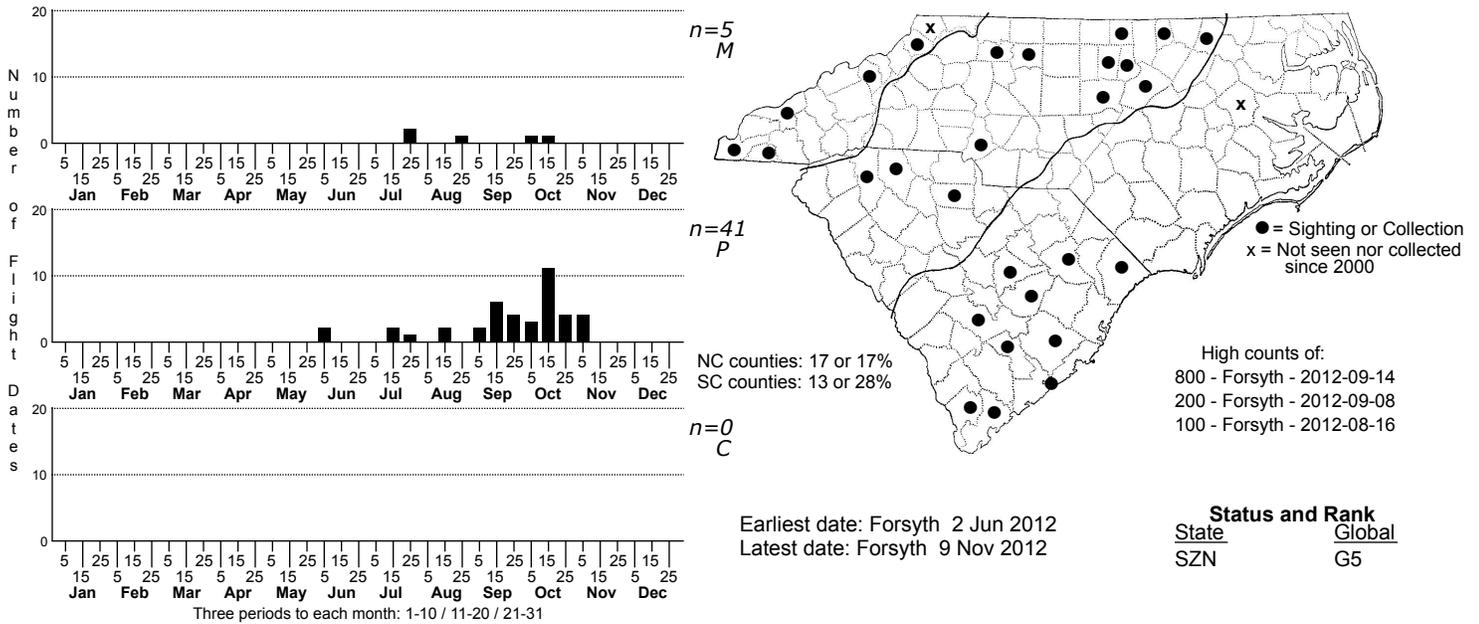


## Dainty Sulphur *Nathalis iole*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Stray. Widely scattered over the Piedmont and Mountains, plus one county in the Coastal Plain.

**ABUNDANCE:** This is a very rare visitor to NC; range is the western half of the country, along with FL. However, in 2012 a colony was established at a site in Forsyth County in the spring, and this colony at a waste treatment plant exploded in summer and fall, peaking with an estimated 800 individuals in September! Individuals from this colony, and likely from other populations in the Eastern and Midwestern states, invaded NC during 2012, presumably in a west to east direction, making it as far east as Halifax and Wake counties. Not surprisingly, none of the remains of the 2012 flight carried over into 2013; no Dainty Sulphurs were seen in NC in 2013, 2014, or 2015. There was a single record in 2016, from Mecklenburg County, but there have been none in the state since then until a photograph in 2019, from Cherokee County. Lastly, there was a photo of one and possibly two at a park in Watauga County in 2024.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Poorly known in NC. To be "expected" in summer or fall. A flurry of records in Mecklenburg County in 2002 between October 12 and November 4, and a recent (2007) record from October 15 in Person County. The numerous records in 2012 fell between June 2 and November 9.

**HABITAT:** Dry open country -- fields, roadsides, gardens, vacant lots, etc.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** Various species in the composite family (Asteraceae) are the foodplants. Nectar plants are poorly reported.

**COMMENTS:** This species migrates northward and eastward from the southwestern United States. It is accidental in most states along the mid-Atlantic seaboard; however, it has been reported from at least 13 counties in SC, including 10 in the Coastal Plain. Thus, it could occur anywhere in NC, and Ron Gattelle collected one in Clay County on July 31, 2001, the first report in several decades for the state. After that record came to light, I received a report of a group of six found in Greenville (Pitt County) in 1977. (See above for comments on the remarkable 2012 outbreak.)

Somewhat remarkable was an "outbreak" of the species in Mecklenburg County in late 2002. Ken Kneidel saw one at Charlotte on October 12; but the report of at least five by Sudie Daves at McDowell Preserve on October 16, most of which were fresh, implied that this represented a brood of siblings that had recently emerged locally, rather than strays that had arrived from distant sites. Individuals of this brood were seen there by others until the end of the month. The last sighting in the county was made on November 4. Nearly as exciting was an individual seen in Person County on October 15, 2007, by Randy Emmitt. Prior to 2012, NC had only 10 records; we now have 47 known records! Though there were no reports in the state in 2013, several reports from previous years were recently obtained, including first records for Yancey and Yadkin counties. In July 2024 Guy McGrane photographed it at a park in Boone (Watauga County); likely this stray arrived from west of the state.