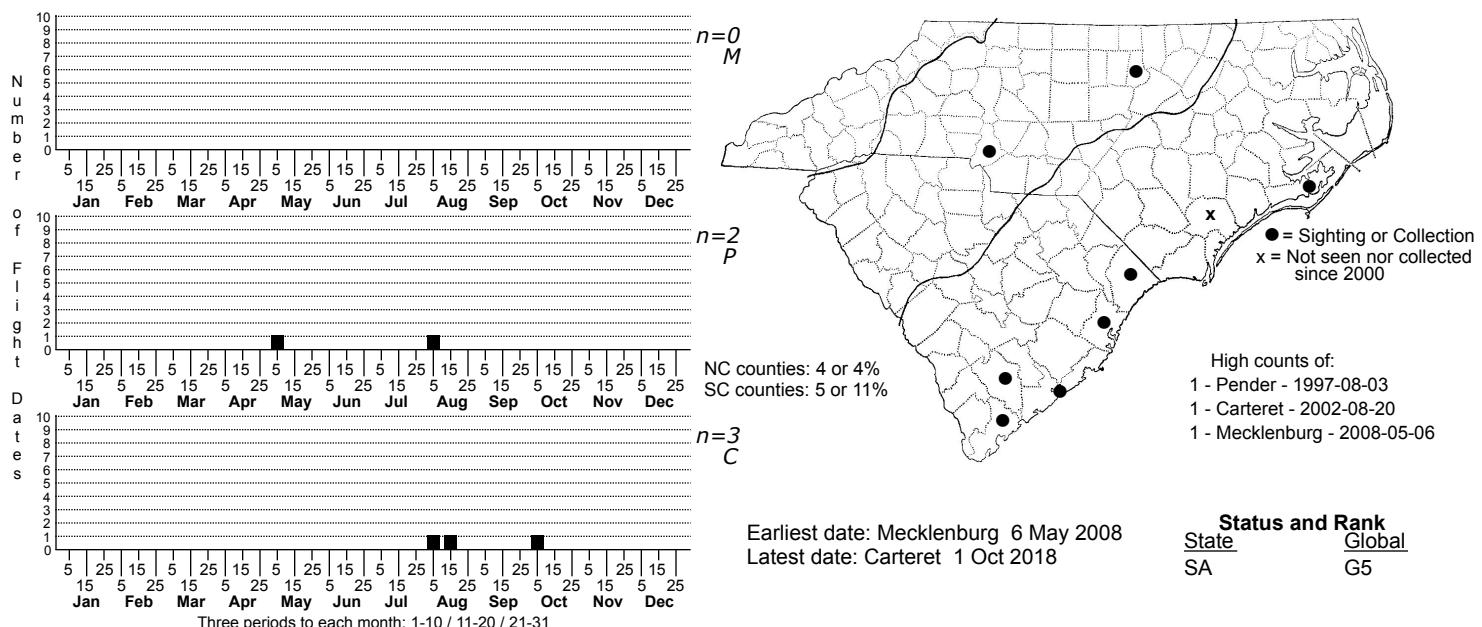


Great Southern White *Ascia monuste*



DISTRIBUTION: This is a casual visitor to NC, recorded only from two coastal counties (Carteret and Pender), and in 2008 from two Piedmont counties (Durham and Mecklenburg). It occurs primarily from FL west through the Gulf States, though at times a semi-resident population can be found along the southern half of the SC coast. It is expected to occur occasionally in NC, generally close to the coast.

ABUNDANCE: Casual stray. Considering that it often has population outbreaks in FL and at times in coastal GA, whereby migrants move northward, observers in NC simply are not finding this large white species as often as might be expected.

FLIGHT PERIOD: NC records are for May 6 (2008), August 3 (1997), August 10 (2008), August 20 (2002), and October 1 (2018). It is expected to occur mainly as a summer or autumn stray.

HABITAT: Open country farther to our south, but primarily coastal; to be looked for around dunes, tidal marshes, gardens, and other open places near the immediate coast -- especially close to (or flying over) marshes. The two Piedmont reports were from fields or woodland borders, as opposed to gardens.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The main foodplants in the Southeast are succulent salt marsh shrub species, such as Saltwort (*Batis maritima*) -- which does not occur in NC -- and glassworts (*Salicornia* spp.). Nectar plants in NC have not been reported.

COMMENTS: Certainly any white butterfly seen along the NC coast should be checked for this native species, which is larger in size than the Cabbage White. It undergoes unpredictable northward emigrations every few years in FL and GA. The individual seen by Derb Carter in Pender County was flying in a "bee-line" northward at Holly Shelter Game Land. Another seen by Carter and by Jeff Pippen in central Carteret County was seen only in flight, strongly flying in a bee-line over a large marsh and field complex. Thus, its behavior is somewhat like that of the abundant Cloudless Sulphur, the best known northward emigrant. The individual photographed by Bob Cavanaugh in Carteret County was nectaring on lantana in a garden.

In 1998, noticeable numbers reached the coast of GA, where usually sporadic; and several were seen in coastal SC north to Charleston. However, we are not aware of any NC reports for 1998-2001, but gratifyingly one was found in 2002, photographed by Bob Cavanaugh in his yard/garden in Carteret County for our first known NC photo. We received only one report from SC in 1999, at Charleston in October, none from 2000-2004, one in 2005, and again none in 2006-2007. A small flight was again reported in coastal SC in 2008, and there were NC sight reports (but no photographs) by Kevin Metcalf in Mecklenburg County and by Will Cook and Brian Bockhahn in Durham County in 2008. These were the first state reports outside of the coastal area, and they were made by experienced observers. In recent years, into 2024, the species is seen almost annually in coastal SC, and there seemed to be one or two locales that represented breeding sites from 2019-22. This gives hope for a few more records from coastal NC in upcoming years, whether as a "global warming" northward push or not. The species is notably "flighty" and is infrequently seen perched; thus, obtaining photos of it can be quite difficult. Suffice to say, better documentation of Great Southern White in the state is needed.