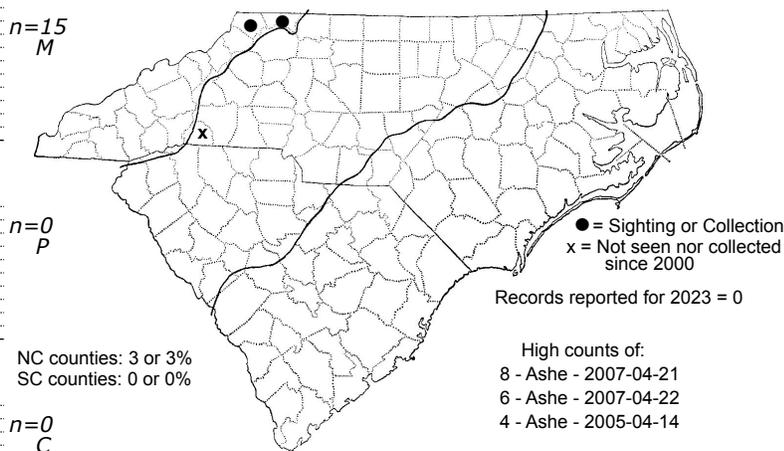
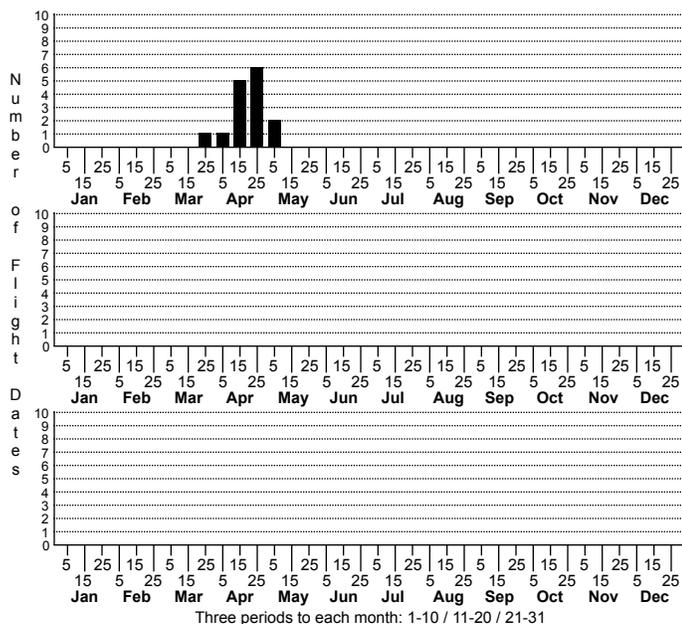


# Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus centaureae*



NC counties: 3 or 3%  
 SC counties: 0 or 0%

Earliest date: Ashe 31 Mar 2007  
 Latest date: Ashe 10 May 2005

**Status and Rank**  
 State: SR - S1  
 Global: G5

Synonym: *Pyrgus centaureae wyandot*, *Pyrgus wyandot*  
 Other Name: Appalachian Grizzled Skipper, Wyandot Skipper, Appalachian Checkered-Skipper

**DISTRIBUTION:** Until 2005, this species had been known in NC from decades-old records only at the White Oak Mountain area of Polk County and at "Montvale". This last site was apparently also in Polk County, and not from Transylvania County as previously indicated in this document. However, this very rare species was found in Ashe and Alleghany counties in April 2005, remarkable discoveries for a very rare taxon (*Pyrgus centaureae wyandot*). Leroy Koehn stated in a text message in 2015 that he has collected this taxon in Cherokee, Haywood, Jackson, Surry, Wilkes, and Yancey counties, in addition to 18 counties in western VA, apparently all prior to the early 1980's. However, as we have not yet received data (location, date, etc.) for these collections, the county records are not included on the range map.

**ABUNDANCE:** Very rare in Mountain counties bordering VA; based on Koehn's records noted above, it could still be present nowadays in a few places south of Ashe and Alleghany counties (and perhaps throughout most Mountain counties). Few people search for any butterflies in the northern Mountains in late March and April, owing to often chilly weather; this might be part of the reason for so few recent records.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** A rather short brood in early spring (only), with the timing of the flight quite variable, depending on the severity of the season. In a warm early spring, the flight occurs from the end of March to about late April. In a cool spring, the flight begins around April 10-15 and extends into early May.

**HABITAT:** Somewhat restricted, though not at all in pristine habitats. Most individuals (known from several locales) have been found near summits of hills or mountains at middle elevations (3000-3500 feet), where a dirt track or road has wide, sunny margins containing considerable amounts of the foodplants and low-growing nectar species. Interestingly, and probably coincidentally, Christmas tree farms are present adjacent to most known sites. Because of the early flight season, areas of gravel or bare dirt/sand for basking are likely important habitat components. Koehn stated that he has never collected it near civilization, but always in remote and wild places.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The main foodplants are several herbs in the rose family (Rosaceae), mainly cinquefoil (*Potentilla* spp.) and Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*). At the above sites, Dwarf Cinquefoil (*P. canadensis*) is likely the sole foodplant. The species nectars on low-growing flowers of the foodplants and other herbs, but also spends much time basking.

**COMMENTS:** Hardly any butterfly discovery in NC in the past 20 years rivals that produced by Ted Wilcox when he found an individual of this species on his sister's property in southern Ashe County on April 11, 2005. To confirm this record, he provided outstanding photographs on his website. The following weekend, Will Cook and I attempted to find the species in Ashe County, but we searched in vain along roadsides on April 16. The following day, we hit paydirt, finding one on public property in neighboring Alleghany County; Cook got several photos (visible on his website and this one) before it took flight. Wilcox has found additional individuals at a few other sites in Ashe County in 2006-2007, and he and several other biologists had some decent one-day totals (up to eight individuals) in 2007. However, a survey targeted just for this species in spring 2023 failed to turn up any individuals.

Most references, including Pelham (2023), treat "wyandot" as a subspecies of *P. centaureae* -- the Grizzled Skipper, which ranges across Canada and south into the mountains of CO and northern NM. This taxon (wyandot) is a Central and Southern Appalachian subspecies. However, "wyandot" is very rare and is under considerable threats, such as from gypsy moth spraying.