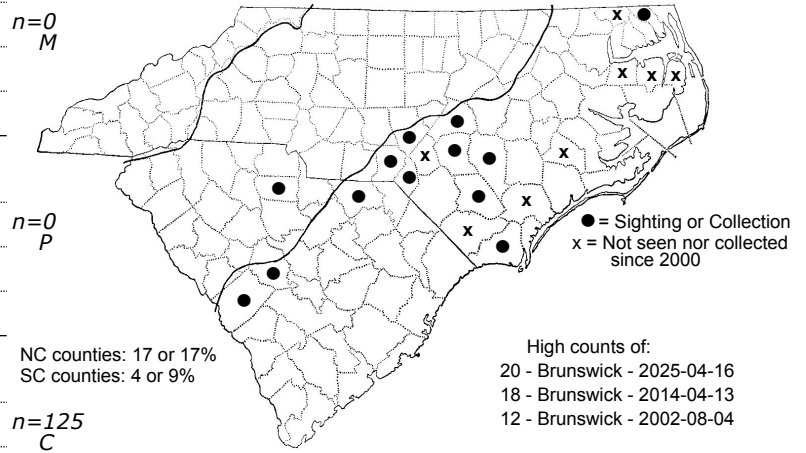
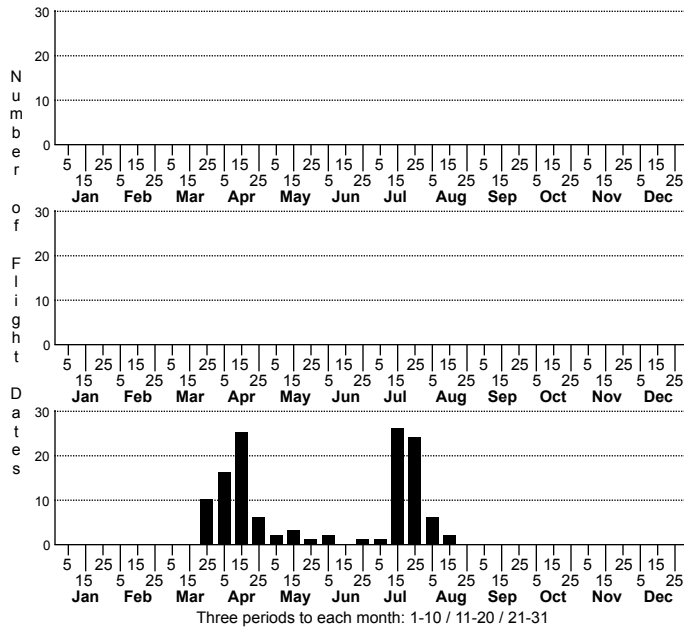


# Hessel's Hairstreak *Callophrys hesseli*



Earliest date: Bladen 24 Mar 2002  
Latest date: Brunswick 13 Aug 2006  
Synonym: *Mitoura hesseli*

**Status and Rank**  
State Global  
SR - S3 G3

**DISTRIBUTION:** Scattered in the Coastal Plain; known from the northeastern Coastal Plain from Gates and Washington counties eastward, from the Sandhills, and from the southern counties (southeast of the Sandhills). Very rare or absent between these areas (mid-central Coastal Plain), with the only record for this region -- where its foodplant is extremely rare -- being from Jones County, within Croatan National Forest.

**ABUNDANCE:** Very local; rare to uncommon. Most numerous in the Sandhills and in the Green Swamp region of central Brunswick County, where the three highest state counts have been made. Disturbing scarcity or lack of recent records for the northeastern counties, especially from mainland Dare County, which has large areas of the foodplant trees.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Two broods. The first brood is from late March to late April in the southern half of the Coastal Plain; early or mid-April to late May or very early June in the northern counties. The second brood is from very late June to mid-August, but primarily from mid-July to mid-August. No evidence that the species is more "numerous" in one brood over the other; double-digits daily counts have been made in both April and in August.

**HABITAT:** Very restricted to sites with Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*), such as pocosins and bay forests. Almost always seen along edges of these forests, as the forest interiors are dark and mostly devoid of flowers.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The sole foodplant is Atlantic White Cedar. The species nectars on blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.) and other ericads, Sweetleaf (*Symplocos tinctoria*), Coastal Sweet-pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), Indian-hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*), and other shrubs.

**COMMENTS:** This can be a difficult species to find in NC. First, suitable stands of white cedar can be hard to find near roads or other easy access. Second, nectar plants are sometimes scarce near such cedar forests. Fortunately, because it is so habitat specific, the observer can purposefully search for the butterflies, though usually unsuccessfully. To find the species, I suggest that you look for blooming blueberries or Sweetleaf in April, and sweet-pepperbush in late July, where they occur near the cedars. Individuals nectar more frequently in mid-morning and in late afternoon (after 4 pm). For much of the middle hours of the day, the butterflies remain high in the white cedars. But, don't be deterred from looking for them in the middle of the day, as there are many records for the middle 5-6 hours of daylight.