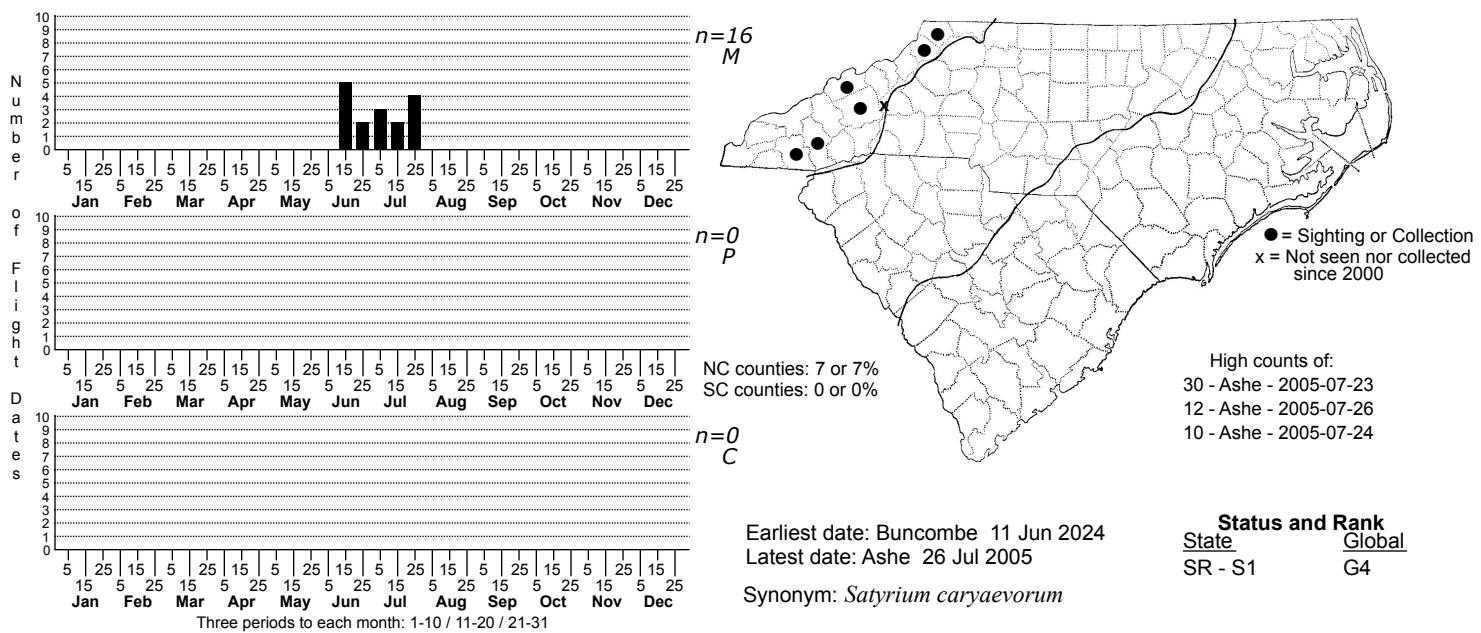


Hickory Hairstreak *Satyrium caryaevorus*



DISTRIBUTION: Restricted to the Mountains; specimens or photographs known only from Ashe, Watauga, Madison, Buncombe, and Macon counties, and observed/reported from Jackson and McDowell counties. Certainly must be present in other Mountain counties ranging to the GA border.

ABUNDANCE: Seemingly very rare. Although it can be overlooked as a Banded or other hairstreak, it has been searched for on a number of occasions, generally without success. The species is also quite rare in VA (about 10-11 counties where recorded), and thus south of PA and NY it is one of the most difficult species to find.

FLIGHT PERIOD: A single brood; the latter half of June to late July, averaging a week or two later than Banded Hairstreak. Thus, both species can occur together, but the Hickory has a later "peak" in early to mid-July, apparently, whereas Banded peaks in the Mountains in the first week of July. On the other hand, several recent records, at low elevations, have been made in mid-June. Perhaps the flight period is advancing earlier in recent years.

HABITAT: Edges of hardwood forests; openings or along roads or trails within hardwood forests, believed to be mainly near hickories, though this connection with hickories has not been reported yet in NC.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: Foodplants are mainly or solely hickories (*Carya* spp.), but a few references suggest that oaks (*Quercus* spp.) might also be used. The species nectars on milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.), Indian-hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*), sumacs (*Rhus* spp.), and others. One photographed in Buncombe County in 2002 was imbibing minerals/moisture from a dirt road.

COMMENTS: This species is poorly known in NC because of the great difficulty of identification; it is very similar to the Banded Hairstreak. Consult Glassberg (1999), Cech and Tudor (2005), and LeGrand et al. (2024) for identification; the text and photographs in these books are excellent. On a Hickory, the postmedian paired white bars are close together near the blue tail spot but become farther apart toward the leading margin. On a Banded, the paired white bars tend to be close together all along the hind wing, from the blue spot to the leading margin. On a Hickory, the top pair of white bars in the postmedian band is greatly displaced basally, and it lies almost in line over the basal paired white bars. On the Banded, the paired white bars on the postmedian band are in a smooth arc, such that the top bars (near the costal margin) are not aligned directly over the basal pair of white bars, but are still toward the outside.

The species has been reported on several occasions in the GA Mountains. Thus, the butterfly certainly occurs in the NC Mountains from the VA line to the GA line. In 2001-02, we received several sight and photo reports from Macon, Buncombe, and Watauga counties, where specimens have previously documented county occurrences. Ted Wilcox photographed large numbers of Bandeds, and apparently some Hickories, at two sites in Ashe County in 2005; many of his photos are probably best left unidentified! His data indicate that Bandeds peaked 7-10 days earlier than Hickory at the same site, though more confirmation is needed in upcoming years. He photographed large numbers of Satyriums in Ashe County in 2006; nearly all seemed to be Bandeds, which now makes us wonder about many of the 2005 individuals identified by others (from his photos) as Hickory Hairstreaks. In 2012, a group observed one in Madison County at a low elevation, with Doug Johnston obtaining definitive photos; he also photographed one in Buncombe County in 2013, and he photographed another in that county in 2016. Another was photographed in Buncombe County in 2024 by Emily Stanley.