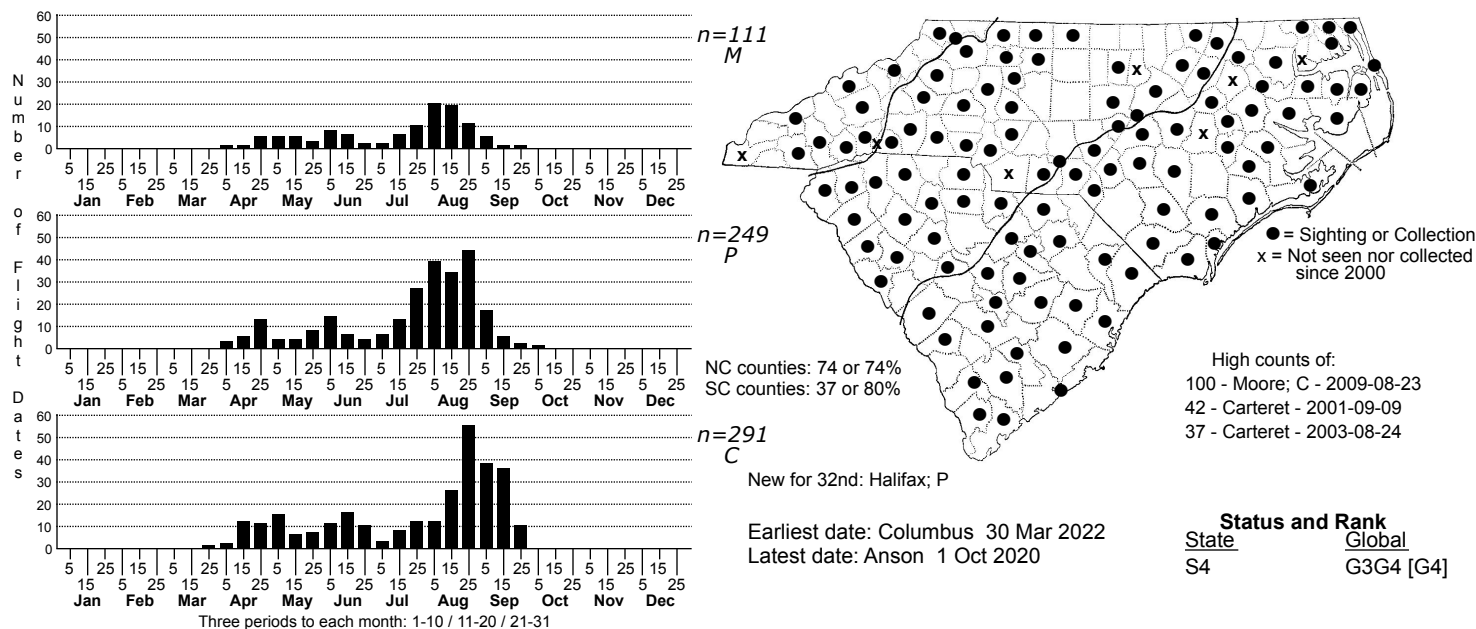


# Lace-winged Roadside-Skipper *Amblyscirtes aesculapius*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Throughout the Coastal Plain, throughout nearly all of the Piedmont, and scattered over most of the Mountains. Probably occurs in nearly all counties in NC (with a possible absence in a few extreme north-central Piedmont counties), though likely absent from the higher Mountains.

**ABUNDANCE:** Widespread, though uncommon to locally common, in the Coastal Plain. Rare to locally uncommon over most of the Piedmont, but very rare in the northern counties. Rare in the southern and central Mountains, and very rare in the northern Mountains (i.e., north of Madison and Buncombe counties).

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Seemingly three broods, even apparently in the Mountains as well. In fact, the Mountain flight pattern of broods is remarkably similar to that of those downstate, and not delayed by one to several weeks as is usual in most species. In all regions, the broods -- if the first and second spikes in the charts are actually broods -- are from early April to mid-May, mid-May to late June or early July, and mid-July to late September. As with most species, the last brood is the longest in time and features the most adults (by far) on the wing.

**HABITAT:** This species is almost always found in or near wetlands, generally moist woods. It has a wide array of habitats, including edges of moist woods, sewerline or powerline clearings through bottomlands, dirt roads through floodplains, and in marshes or ditches near woods. It is seldom found more than about 50 yards from moist hardwoods, perhaps because its foodplant is cane (*Arundinaria* spp.).

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** Canes (*Arundinaria* spp.) are apparently the only foodplants of the caterpillars. The adults nectar frequently, for an *Amblyscirtes*. They nectar on the usual butterfly plants such as milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.), Indian-hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*), and Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*).

**COMMENTS:** This is one of the most beautiful skippers, as the intricate lacing on the under wings is most unusual. Though not really common, it is nonetheless the most numerous of the six (or now seven) *Amblyscirtes* skippers in NC. It also nectars far more often than do others in the genus. The sight of one of these butterflies on a large flower such as Cutleaf Coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) is sure to be a memorable moment in your year of butterflying!

The flight period "curves" have taken better shape in recent years, with more data. Distinct peaks and gaps are showing now. However, can a species of skipper really complete two broods between early or mid-April and early July? A few other roadside-skipper also have three broods in NC, but the middle brood is typically in July (or into early August). Because there are seemingly distinct spikes and dips in all three provinces between early April and early July, it would seem very unlikely that this three-month period is composed of just a single brood.