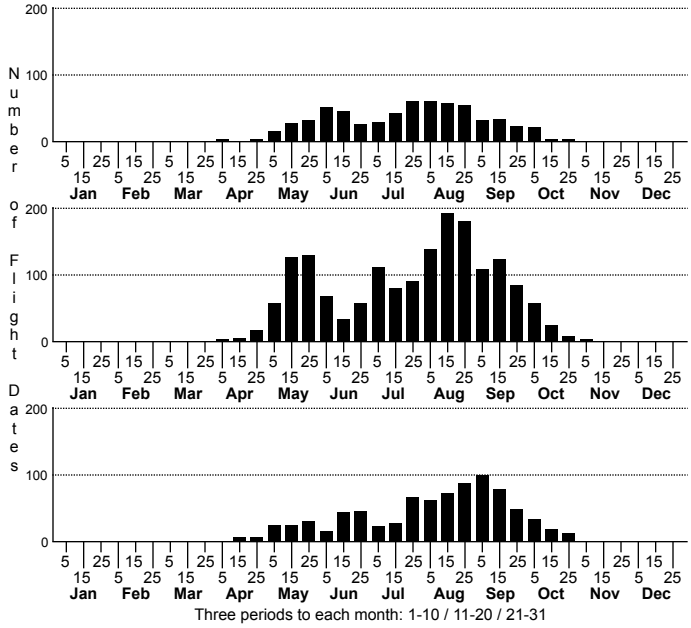
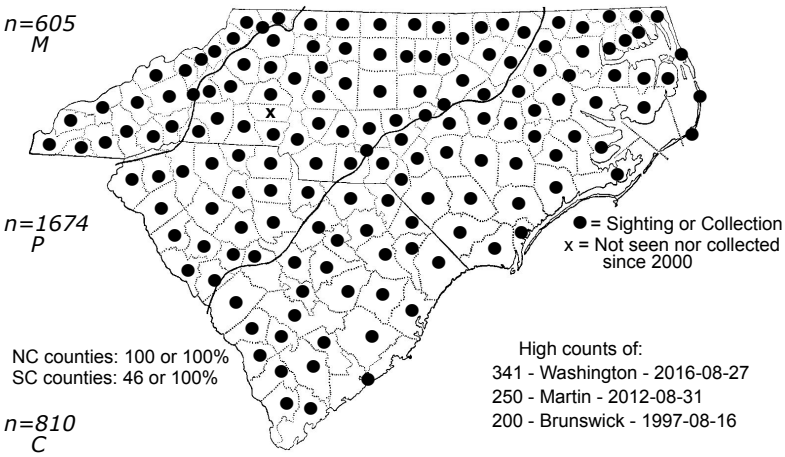
Least Skipper *Ancyloxypha numitor*





NC counties: 100 or 100%
SC counties: 46 or 100%

High counts of:
341 - Washington - 2016-08-27
250 - Martin - 2012-08-31
200 - Brunswick - 1997-08-16

New for 33rd: McDowell; M

Earliest date: Madison 7 Apr 2012
Latest date: Orange 6 Nov 2004

Status and Rank

State	Global
S5	G5

Other Name: Common Least Skipper

DISTRIBUTION: Statewide, but in somewhat local colonies; present in all provinces, and reported in all 100 counties, including along the Outer Banks.

ABUNDANCE: Local in occurrence, but common to occasionally abundant where found. More numerous in the lower Coastal Plain than elsewhere, and it is also quite common on the Outer Banks.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Apparently three broods statewide. Downstate, the first brood is clearly from very late April to June 5-10. Later broods (two or possibly three) run together and are difficult to discern from the flight data, but the species is present consistently from mid-June to late October. In the Mountains, the first brood occurs from early May to late June, with the second and third broods occurring from the beginning of July to early October.

HABITAT: This is strictly a marsh species. It is found in discrete colonies that stay close to the grasses and sedges. It favors medium-height (1-3 feet) grasses of fresh to slightly brackish marshes, ditches, pond margins, wet meadows, wet savannas, and the like. It seldom strays to dry grassy areas.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: Grasses, undoubtedly wetland species, are the foodplants of the caterpillars. Adults nectar less commonly than many other skippers, favoring low flowers within a foot of the ground.

COMMENTS: This is one of the most colonial of our butterflies in NC. It is difficult to find just one Least Skipper; with a little search five to ten or more can often be seen nearby. It has a distinct weak bouncing flight, very like a satyr, as it flies amid (as opposed to above) the grasses and reeds of its marshy habitat.

It is surprising that the NABA Checklist (2001), the Butterflies and Moths of North America [BAMONA] website, and the Butterflies of America website still call the species "Least Skipper". As there is the Tropical Least Skipper (Ancyloxypha arene) in AZ, the name of "Least Skipper" is a nested name, of which NABA disapproves. NatureServe now has adopted the common name of "Common Least Skipper", with no hyphen. We will retain the name of "Least Skipper" for now, but do not be surprised to see this name come into disfavor and/or disuse in upcoming years. As we have "Checkered-Skipper" for the genus Burnsius, "Roadside-Skipper" for Amblyscirtes, etc., "Least-Skipper" should be used for the genus Ancyloxypha.