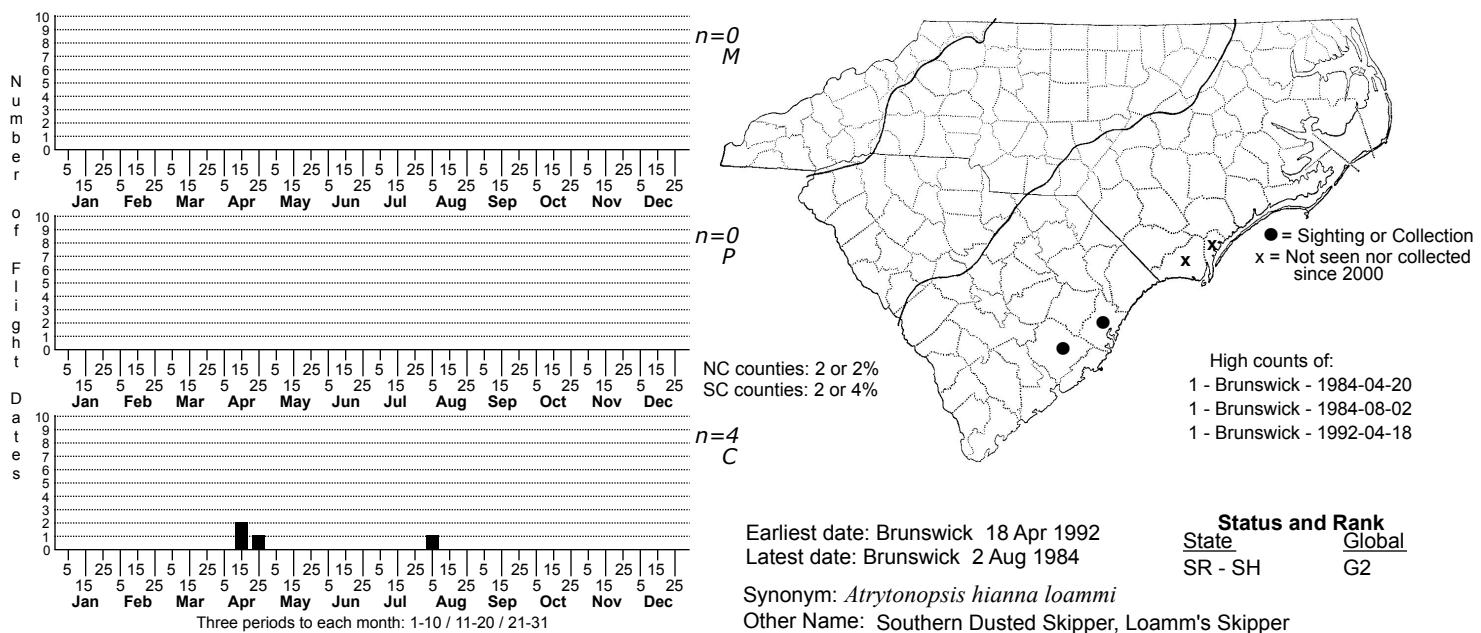


# Loammi Skipper *Atrytonopsis loammi*



**DISTRIBUTION:** This taxon, often considered a subspecies of Dusted Skipper, is found in parts of FL, west along the Gulf coast to LA, and north near the Atlantic coast to southern NC (Scott 1986). In NC it is (was) apparently known from Brunswick County and New Hanover County. The taxon is definitely known from Berkeley County, SC, and I decided to place a record of "Dusted Skipper" from Georgetown County on the Loammi Skipper map instead of the Dusted Skipper map, based on my best guess as to range and other factors. The taxon found on the coast of Carteret and Onslow counties -- recently described and named as *A. quinteri* -- is considered to be a separate species by the Butterflies of America website and by Pelham (2023).

**ABUNDANCE:** This skipper is believed to be of historical occurrence in the state. It has not been seen in Brunswick and New Hanover counties in roughly 30 years, despite more recent searches at the single known Brunswick County site. Interestingly, Bo Sullivan had as many as 10-12 individuals in a day at this Brunswick site (pers. comm.), though the website does not have a date for this count. Certainly, it was at least 30 years ago.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Two broods in the Carolinas. The few dates available for NC are for the last half of April and in early August, with the August record clearly from a second brood. Gatrell (J. Lep. Soc. 1975, pp. 56-59) noted that the species flies in April, July, and August at the only SC site known to him at that time (Berkeley County). Loammi Skipper in FL has several (two or three) broods between February and November (Glassberg et al. 2000, Cech and Tudor 2005, NABA Sightings website).

**HABITAT:** The habitat for the taxon in Brunswick County was "old field or clearcut now growing in herbs and some saplings", according to Bo Sullivan. This site was adjacent to flatwoods/savanna habitat. In FL, the habitat is mainly drier flatwoods, prairies, and perhaps sandy woods.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The foodplants are presumably bluestems or broomsedges (*Schizachyrium* and *Andropogon* spp.). There is no information about nectar plants used in NC.

**COMMENTS:** Scott (1986), Opler and Malikul (1992), Glassberg (1993, 1999), and NABA (2024) consider this taxon to be a subspecies of Dusted Skipper. However, biologists who know the genus *Atrytonopsis* well in the Southeast consider Loammi to be a valid species. This is the treatment also used by Harris (1972), Gatrell (1975), Brock and Kaufman (2003), NatureServe Explorer, Butterflies of America, and Pelham (2023).

The chief separating factor between Dusted Skipper and the Loammi Skipper (and the Crystal Skipper) is the brood sequence. Dusted is single-brooded throughout its range (which extends south to southern GA and LA), with the others multi-brooded. Loammi is at least double-brooded and may well be triple-brooded in FL. Dusted flies early enough in the spring, particularly in coastal NC, SC, and GA, that there is sufficient time for a second brood in summer or fall (as there is for Loammi and Crystal skippers); no such second brood is present. The Loammi Skipper and the Crystal Skipper tend to have numerous white spots scattered over the hind wing below, almost always with a well-formed and striking chevron, whereas Dusted generally has very few spots, and the spots tend to be "dots" rather than "spots". However, some Loammi Skippers north of peninsular FL can have few white spots below. And, some Dusteds can look quite strikingly spotted on the hind wing below, but these are essentially south of NC, including in LA, one reason for the hesitancy of some entomologists to consider the Loammi as a separate species. Needless to say, we know very little about the Loammi Skipper outside of FL, and it may well be extirpated in NC. But, Bo Sullivan (pers. comm.) does indicate that Loammi did exist in central Brunswick County (and flew earlier in spring than Dusted) in the same region.