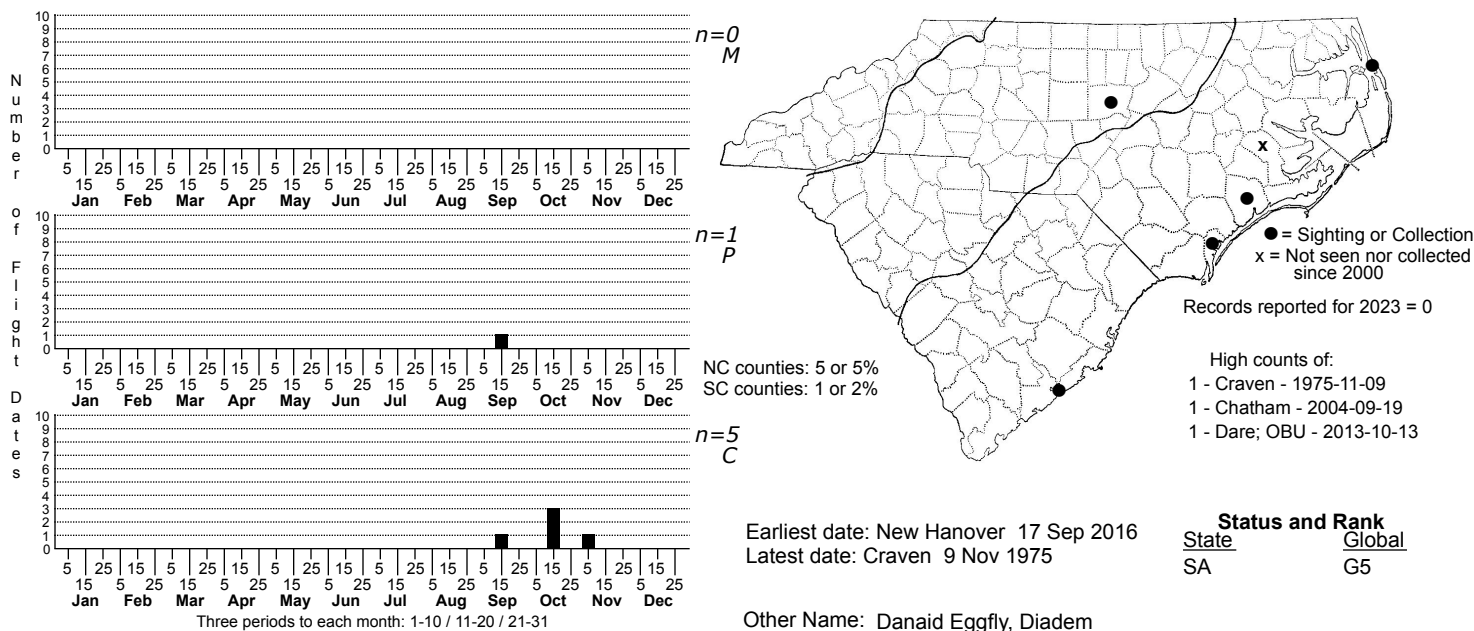


## Mimic *Hypolimnas misippus*



**DISTRIBUTION:** A casual stray to the eastern half of the state. Formerly, there was a single NC record (Cumberland County). However, Bob Cavanaugh has made an important correction to this record. In a 2005 e-mail message, he indicated to us that he collected a Mimic in Craven County on November 9, 1975. He noted that there was no record for Craven County in the Nekola-Opler unpublished atlas of North Carolina butterflies, but instead was a county dot for Cumberland County. Also, the Opler and Krizek (1984) range map for Mimic has a dot in the general vicinity of Cumberland County but not for Craven County, further indicating that Cavanaugh's record was attributed to the wrong county. Thus, there apparently never was a record for Cumberland County.

Very surprising was a female Mimic photographed by Mike Dunn in his yard in Chatham County on September 19, 2004. Just as surprising was a male seen by Mary Doll in her yard in Manteo (Dare County) on October 13 and 15, 2013; and Mac Basnight obtained excellent photos to document the record. James Reber photographed a female in New Hanover County on September 17, 2016; this photo is posted on the BAMONA (Butterflies and Moths of North America) website. Mark Shields photographed a fresh male Mimic on October 17, 2017 at a college campus garden in Onslow County. For a species that is likely introduced in the West Indies -- its native range is Asia and Africa -- it seems remarkable that NC now has five records, as there are very few others for the eastern United States (though GA had three records in fall 2020, and South Carolina had one in fall 2022 [photo on iNaturalist]).

**ABUNDANCE:** Casual in the eastern half of the state, though essentially coastal; five known records.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** In the West Indies, April to May, and September to December, according to Opler and Malikul (1992). The NC records occur "nicely" in a fairly narrow span of dates in the fall, from mid-September to the first half of November -- typical of a migratory species. The SC record was also in this narrow period, on November 11.

**HABITAT:** Open, weedy areas (Opler and Malikul 1992). In NC, mainly found in yards and gardens close to the coast.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** Various herbaceous species in tropical families are foodplants. Nectar plants are not well reported in the United States.

**COMMENTS:** "Mimic" is a rather poor common/English name for this butterfly. Though the female does mimic an African butterfly -- the Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*), quite a few other butterfly species are mimics. Another common name -- Danaid Eggfly -- sounds very un-butterfly-like; maybe the third common name -- Diadem -- is the best common name. Although one might assume the 2004 individual was an escape, the report came shortly after a strong hurricane passed through the West Indies and came into NC. One lepidopterist believes the butterfly could have legitimately been transported to NC via such a storm, as he is aware of strong colonizing abilities of the Mimic. Weather in relation to the 2013 record is not known, but it came during a period of considerable northbound movements of several Southern migrants, especially the Zebra Longwing. The 2017 record also came a couple of weeks after several very intense hurricanes formed from tropical waves leaving the west coast of Africa. However, this last individual was so fresh that one may wonder if it eclosed at the garden itself, rather than being carried or blown by hurricanes from Africa or passing through the West Indies.