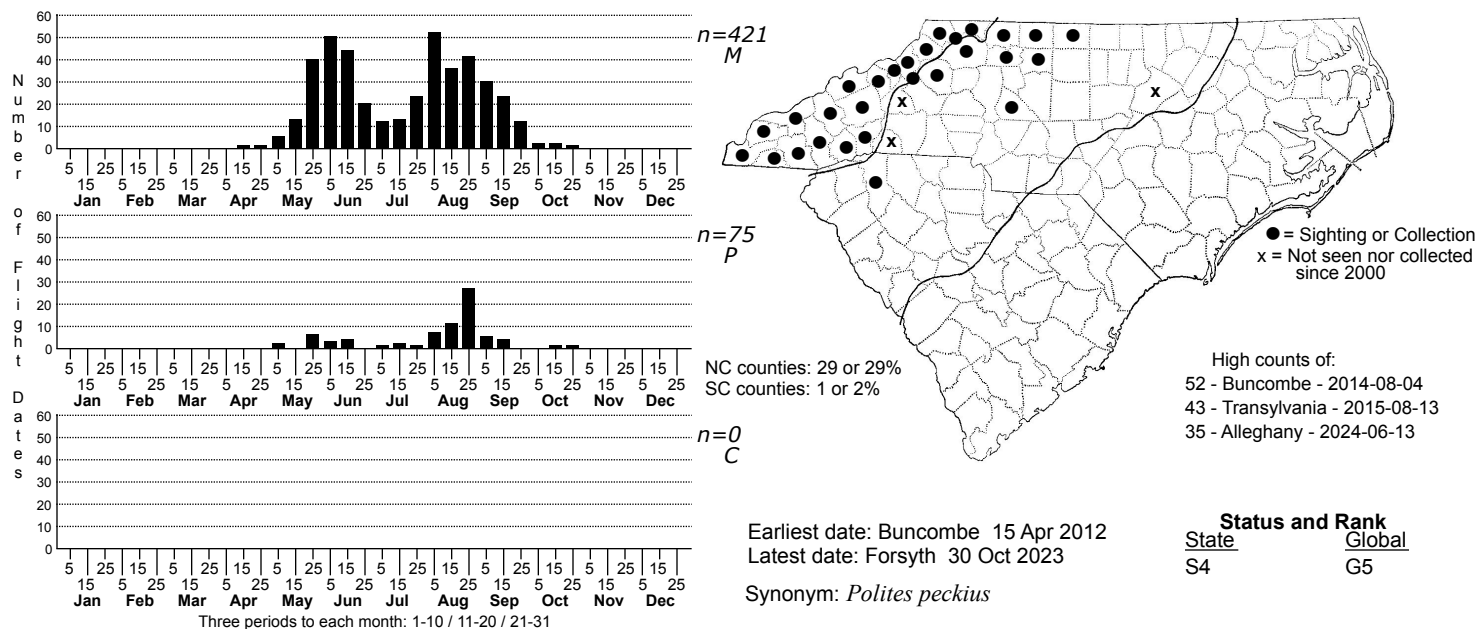


Peck's Skipper *Polites peckius*



DISTRIBUTION: Throughout the Mountains, and also the western and northwestern Piedmont. An old record for Wake County might have been of a vagrant, as more recent records are eastward only to Rockingham, Forsyth, Rowan, and Polk counties.

ABUNDANCE: Fairly common to locally common in the northern and central Mountains, but uncommon and somewhat local south of Asheville. Rare to uncommon along the northwestern and far western Piedmont. This is a common to very common butterfly in states to our north, but in NC it is much less numerous. Unlike most other skippers of grassy habitats, this species has not suffered greatly like them in recent years, perhaps as few populations occur in powerline clearings and other sites impacted by herbiciding.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Two broods, with the possibility of a small third brood, in October. In the Mountains it flies from early May to early or mid-July, and the second brood is from mid-July to late September, with a possible tiny third brood in October. More flight data are needed for the Piedmont, but it appears that the flight periods are somewhat similar to those in the Mountains, with a small brood from early May to mid- or late June, and a larger one from early July into September. Several October records for the Piedmont could be from a tiny third brood, or simply worn individuals from the second brood.

HABITAT: This species favors sunny, open places -- old fields, meadows, wooded edges, and roadsides. It is reasonably widespread, and prefers dry places to moist ones. It prefers full sun, away from wooded margins; montane meadows with an abundance of Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*) are favored. Unlike several related skippers, such as Tawny-edged and Crossline, it does not require habitats dominated by native grasses, but will occur in pastures and meadows more than in powerline clearings, for example.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplants are various grasses. The adults are fond of nectaring; they show a strong preference for Red Clover.

COMMENTS: This is one of the smaller skippers in NC, but fortunately it is active and brightly patterned on the hind wings, rendering it easy to identify. Ted Wilcox, who lives in Ashe County, has added numerous records for the species in the northern Mountains from 2005 to 2007, and at long last we have respectable high counts. (Prior to 2005, the previous single-day high count for the state was a "measly" 11 individuals.) The Buncombe County butterfly count in 2014, held on August 4, tallied a state record 52 individuals, especially notable for being so far to the south in the Mountains.