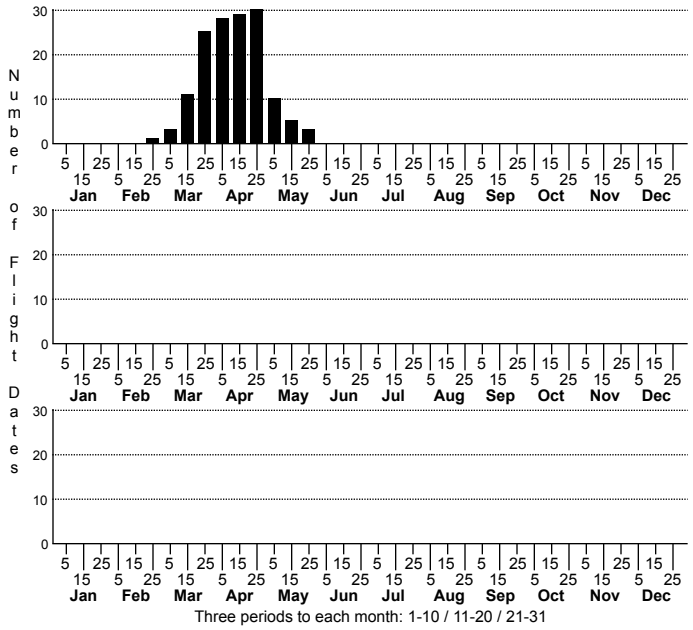
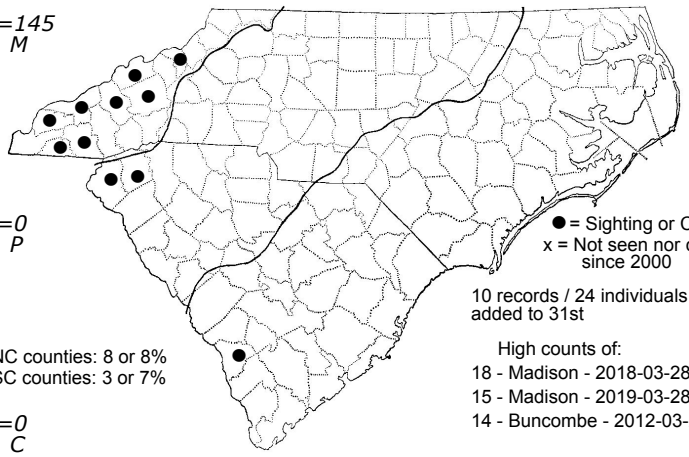
Silvery Blue *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*





10 records / 24 individuals added to 31st

NC counties: 8 or 8%
SC counties: 3 or 7%

High counts of:
18 - Madison - 2018-03-28
15 - Madison - 2019-03-28
14 - Buncombe - 2012-03-22

Earliest date: Madison 21 Feb 2019
Latest date: Clay 27 May 2005

Status and Rank

State	Global
W - S2S3	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Mountain region; ought to occur throughout the Mountains, as this is a Northern species, but no records as yet from the northern counties. Elevation range not well known, but it does occur below 2000 feet and above 4000 feet.

ABUNDANCE: In the central and southern Mountains (Madison and Buncombe counties southward), it is rare to uncommon, but may be locally numerous. Apparently very rare in the northern Mountains, and it might be absent in some counties.

FLIGHT PERIOD: A single brood; formerly from mid-March to mid-May. However, 2005 was an abnormally cool spring, and the species was recorded on several occasions as late as May 27. The flight period is shifting earlier in the past decade, now from early March (with a few late February records) to late April, rarely now after early May.

HABITAT: The species appears to be fairly restricted in habitat to places where Carolina Vetch (Vicia caroliniana), and perhaps Crown-vetch (Securigera varia), is present. We have found them along wooded roadbanks and along trails through hardwood forests where colonies of the Carolina Vetch are present (and blooming). The forests may be cove forests or fairly dry forests, usually where sunlight reaches the vetch. The butterflies keep close to the vetch, not normally seen more than about 100 feet from them. In April 1996 the Carolina Butterfly Society found the species at one or two sites with Crown-vetch in Graham County.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplant appears to primarily be Carolina Vetch in NC, but Crown-vetch might also be used, though the use of this introduced species has perhaps not been confirmed. The species nectars on Carolina Vetch or on other plants; Robin's-plantain (Erigeron pulchellus) is often used as another nectar source.

COMMENTS: This is one of the easier butterflies to look for. Of course, the observer will often miss the Silvery Blue whenever he finds a patch of vetch, but the species seems to be closely tied to sizable patches of vetch. Steve Hall and I have seen up to 10 individuals at a few such patches of Carolina Vetch. Despite a moderate amount of field work in Mountain counties northeast of Buncombe and Madison (both of which have many records), the Silvery Blue is known from just one (Mitchell) of six such counties fully within this province.

NOTE: The outlier record for Allendale County, SC, actually a specimen collected by Billy McCord over a decade ago, is part of a strongly disjunct population (if it still exists) in the upper Coastal Plain of GA and western SC. Were it not for the presence of some specimens, most people would strongly assume that some other blue/azure species was being misidentified. There is no evidence of any upper Coastal Plain or Sandhills (or even Piedmont) populations of Silvery Blue farther northward in the Carolinas.