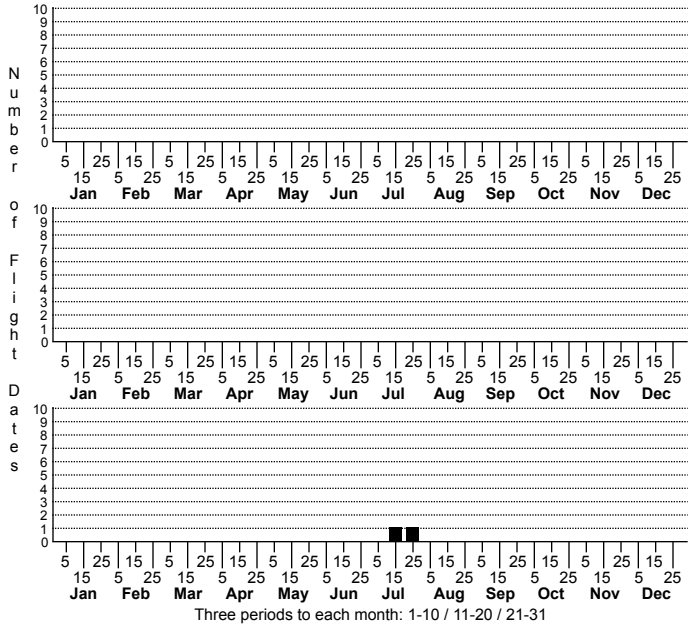
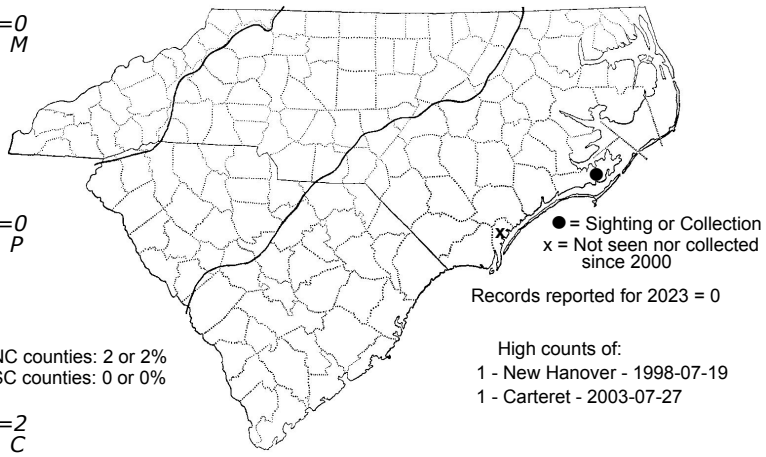
Soldier *Danaus eresimus*





Records reported for 2023 = 0

NC counties: 2 or 2%
SC counties: 0 or 0%

High counts of:
1 - New Hanover - 1998-07-19
1 - Carteret - 2003-07-27

Earliest date: New Hanover 19 Jul 1998
Latest date: Carteret 27 Jul 2003

Status and Rank

State	Global
SA	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Two records, from Fort Fisher in New Hanover County and Fort Macon State Park in Carteret County. This is a subtropical and relatively non-migratory species, ranging northward only to central FL and central TX. There are no previously known East Coast records north of GA, and it is perhaps surprising that the Soldier has yet to be recorded from SC -- especially considering the great number of FL stray species found in the state in recent years.

ABUNDANCE: Accidental.

FLIGHT PERIOD: The only records are one photographed by Derb Carter at Fort Fisher on July 19, 1998, and by Randy Newman at Fort Macon on July 27, 2003.

HABITAT: In FL and TX, the species is found in open fields, wooded borders, and other mostly disturbed sites. It is not normally associated with coastal habitats, but at Fort Fisher and at Fort Macon the butterflies were found along the edges of a maritime forest and brackish marsh.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplants are in the milkweed family (Apocynaceae). Adults nectar on a wide variety of flowers.

COMMENTS: This species is easily overlooked as a Queen when perched, and as a Monarch when flying. These two related species are quite migratory, as opposed to the rather sedentary Soldier. The two NC records of Soldier are eerily similar. Both of the sightings took place in the exact areas where Queens had been seen in previous years. In fact, Queens were reported at each site a few days earlier or later! One can speculate that the Soldiers arrived with groups of Queens. Interestingly, another very rare stray (a White Peacock) was found at Fort Fisher on the same day as the first Soldier, implying a northward exodus of butterflies from FL, which was undergoing severe drought and wildfires during July 1998.