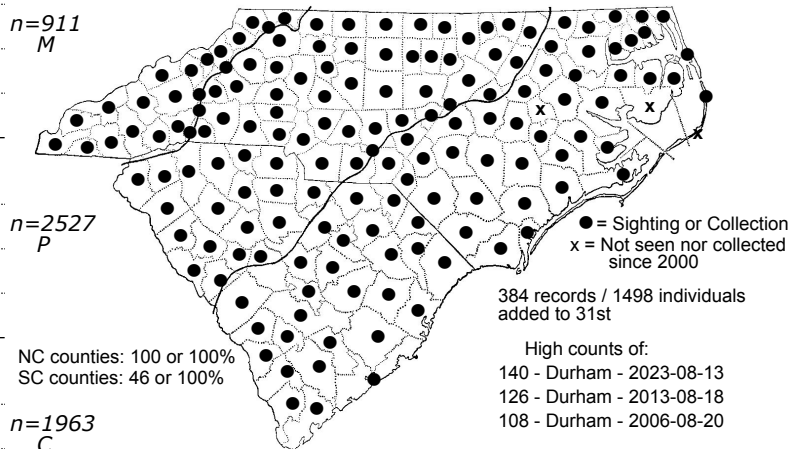
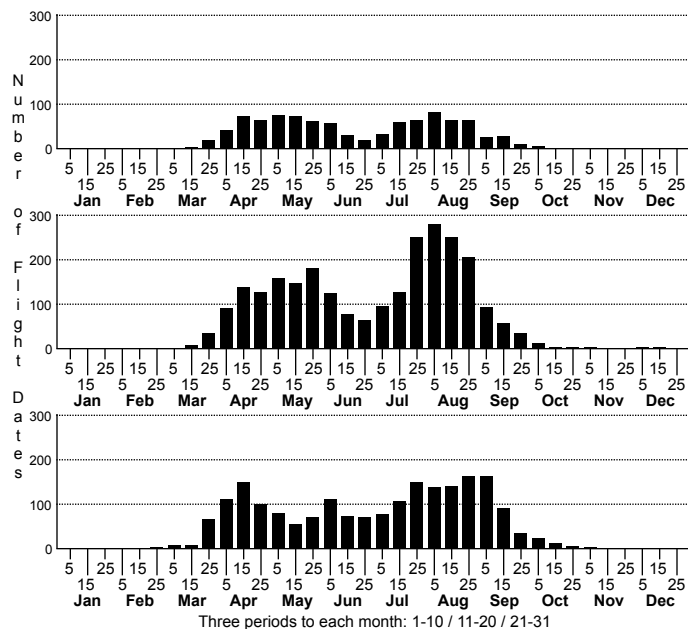


## Spicebush Swallowtail *Pterourus troilus*



Earliest date: Richmond; C 28 Feb 2023  
 Latest date: Forsyth 12 Dec 2015  
 Synonym: *Papilio troilus*

Status and Rank	
State	Global
S5	G5

**DISTRIBUTION:** Statewide, widespread in all three provinces; found in all counties.

**ABUNDANCE:** Widespread and generally common, though seldom seen in really large numbers; abundance is reasonably similar in each of the three provinces. It is the second-most commonly seen swallowtail (after Eastern Tiger) in the Piedmont.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Late March to early October, and sparingly into December in mild autumns. A few records from late February into mid-March in recent years. Apparently two broods, with a possible partial third brood; main flights downstate are late March to mid- or late June, and early July to early October. September and October may represent a small third flight. The Mountain flight period is late March to late June, and early July to late September.

**HABITAT:** Generally along woodland borders and openings, both upland hardwoods and bottomlands. Prefers hardwood forests over pine or other conifer forests. Seen along wooded roads, powerline clearings, etc., but not common in deep woods. Not often seen in extensive open country, though at times wanders to gardens and suburban areas.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** Despite the species' common name, the primary foodplant in the state is Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), though Northern Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) is also used. Nectar plants are highly varied, but milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) are commonly used.

**COMMENTS:** This species flies somewhat slower or less erratically than the Black Swallowtail and is thus easier to identify in flight. This species and the dark form female Eastern Tiger Swallowtail are the most often seen dark swallowtails in the Piedmont, but the Pipevine Swallowtail may outnumber the Spicebush in many Mountain sites. Despite its name being Spicebush Swallowtail, most ovipositing in NC has been observed on Sassafras, which grows in full sun or partial shade, places favored by this swallowtail; the butterfly is actually not often seen in the vicinity of spicebushes, which typically grow in moderate to deep shade of forest interiors. Thus, "Sassafras Swallowtail" might be a better name for the species!