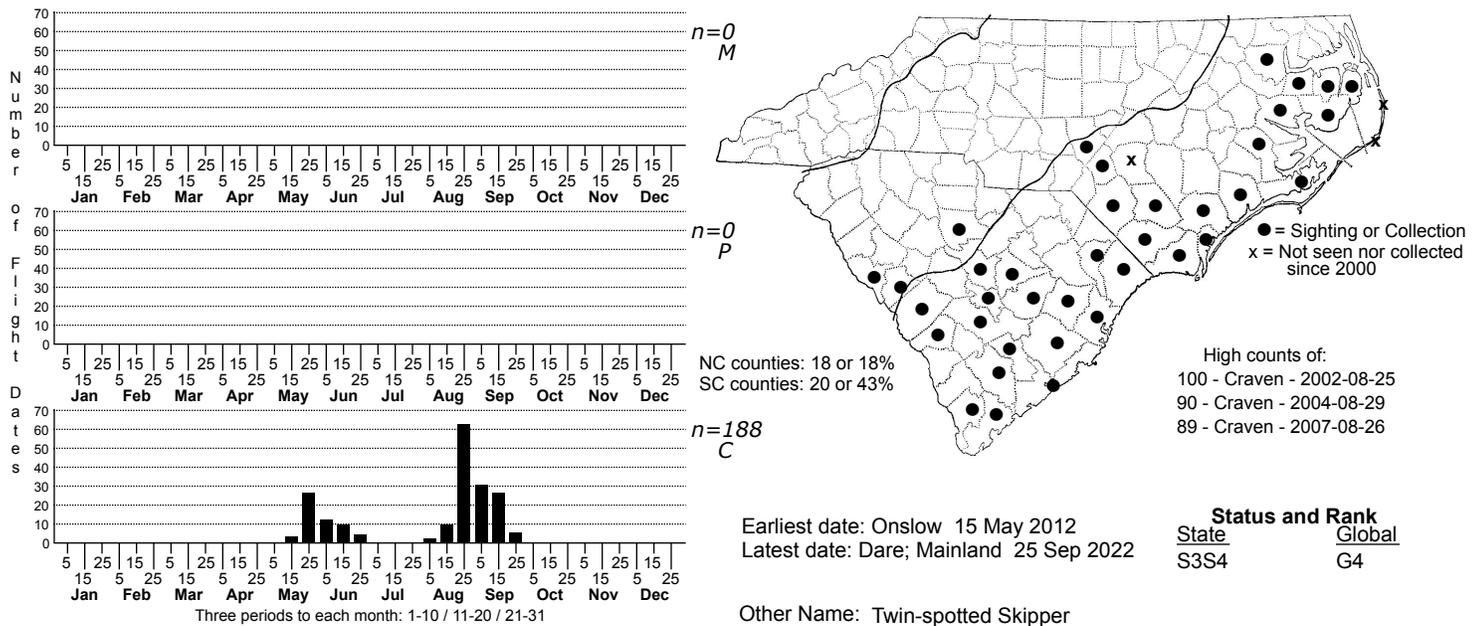


Twin-spot Skipper *Oligoria maculata*



DISTRIBUTION: Restricted to the Coastal Plain, primarily to the tidewater and lower Coastal Plain sections north to mainland Dare, Tyrrell, Washington, and Bertie counties, where it is at the northern edge of the total range. Ranges sparingly westward to the eastern Sandhills region, where a photo from Hoke County in 2019 added that county to the range, and a record for Bladen County in 2021 further solidified the range map for the southern Coastal Plain.

ABUNDANCE: Generally uncommon, to locally common, in the lower Coastal Plain part of the range. Very rare away from the lower Coastal Plain, essentially just into the eastern part of the Sandhills. No records yet for Scotland or Richmond counties in the southwestern Sandhills.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Two broods; present from mid- or late May to late June, and from mid-August to late September. We have no records for July; thus, the gap between broods is quite clear.

HABITAT: This is a species of many divergent wetland habitats. It is found in savannas, ditches, wet powerline clearings, fresh to slightly brackish marshes (mainly along margins), and margins of wet woods. It typically is found in somewhat open areas, as opposed to along roads or trails within a swamp.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The foodplants are apparently not well known, but grasses are suspected. The species nectars on many flowers, but Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) is a favorite. I have seen them nectaring several times on that flower, as well as on thistles (*Cirsium smallii* and *C. virginianum*), blazing-stars (*Liatris* spp.), and other species.

COMMENTS: The Twin-spot is a rather unusual skipper; it has no close relatives in NC and it should be unmistakable, though some people have mistakenly called female Yehl Skippers as Twin-spot Skippers. It is not as colonial as many other wetland species. However, I have found several sites in mainland Hyde and Dare counties where over a dozen have been found in an hour or two; and observers encountered 25 individuals, all in a single powerline clearing, on a butterfly count in Craven County in 1999, 30 in the same clearing in 2000, 40 there in 2001, and a whopping 100 estimated there in 2002. I found the species at two sites in Bertie County in 2012, extending the range to the northwest by perhaps 30 miles. A sight record from Moore County in 2003 extends the range inland slightly, but the status of the species in the inner half of the Coastal Plain is very poorly known (other than being seemingly absent northeast of Cumberland County). A few purported Twin-spot Skipper photos from the Sandhills have actually been female Yehl Skippers, contributing to the uncertain status in this region. (Female Yehl Skippers have a rusty tone to the ground color below, whereas the Twin-spot Skipper is always cold brown without any orange or rusty tint. Female Yehls usually have a faint ray between the hind wing spots, and usually show some rusty color on the fore wing below, as well.) If seen only from above, the species is easily passed over as the much more common Clouded Skipper; both are dark brown and have a few small white spots on the fore wing; thus, observing the under side of the hind wing is essential.