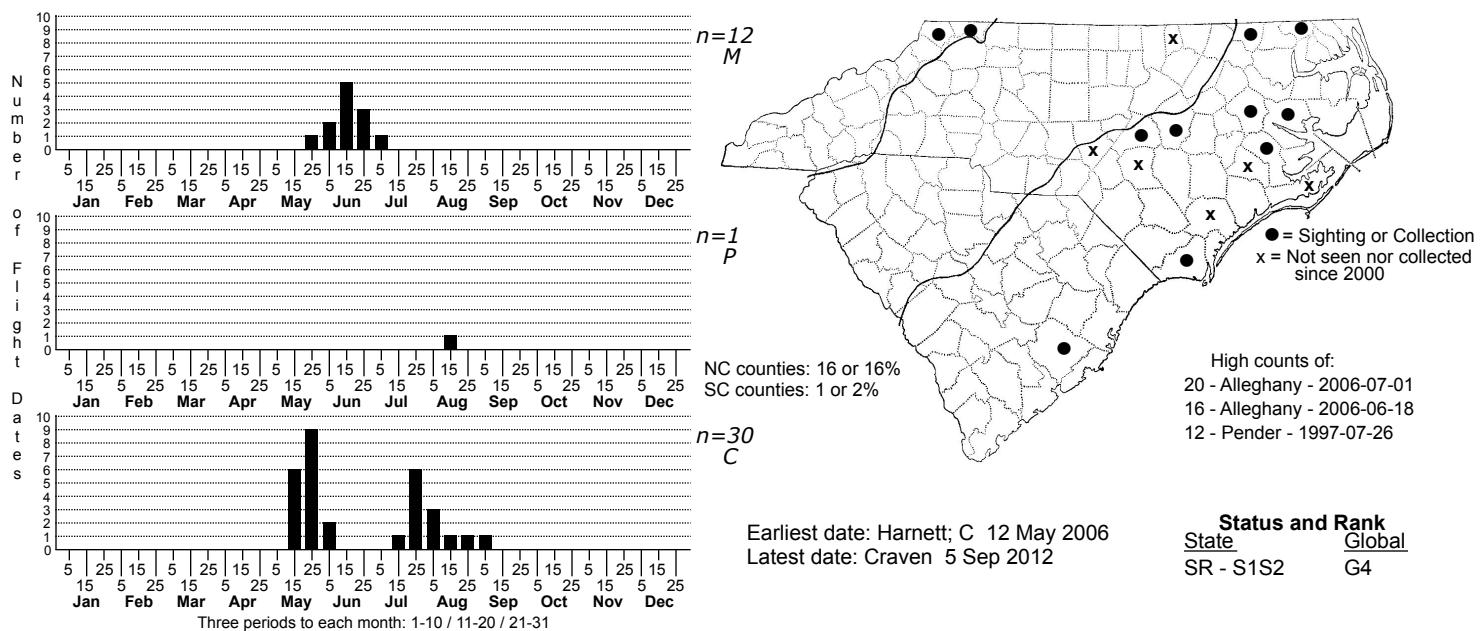


Two-spotted Skipper *Euphyes bimacula*



DISTRIBUTION: Very widely scattered in the Coastal Plain (13 counties), both in the lower Coastal Plain and near the Fall Line. Also found in the lower Piedmont (in 1997). Found for the first time in the Mountains in 2006, extending the montane portion of the species' range from VA south to extreme northwestern NC.

ABUNDANCE: Seemingly declining across the state in recent years, with very few observations since 2015. Very rare and poorly known in the Coastal Plain; extremely rare in the lower Piedmont. In the northern Mountains, it was common at one site (but that site is now being degraded by woody vegetation), and it was found at two additional sites; however, it is certainly very rare on the whole in this region of NC. Unlike the Dukes' and Berry's skippers, this is a Northern species, ranging widely south to WV and VA, but found only sparingly southward. As a result of the apparent decline in NC, the State Rank has been shifted from S2 to a rarer S1S2, as of late 2020.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Two broods in the Coastal Plain: mid-May to early June, and mid-July to mid- or late August, with one photo record for early September. Of the double-brooded skippers in the NC Coastal Plain, this species terminates its second brood about as early as any. Note that there are more records for the July 21-31 period than for any other "ten-day" period in the second brood. Piedmont flight periods are unknown (two broods?), whereas there is just one brood in the Mountains, from very late May or early June to very early July.

HABITAT: This is a wetland skipper, but it can be quite particular about its habitat. It is generally found in open, sunny savannas or "bogs", with relatively short vegetation (mostly less than 1-foot tall). It favors the wettest part of pine savannas, where an abundance of sedges are found. In NC, it has also been seen in other open wetlands with sedges, such as wet clearcuts and moist powerline clearings. In the Mountains, it is found in bogs and wet meadows.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: Sedges (*Carex* spp.) are the foodplants of the caterpillars. Bo Sullivan (pers. comm.) says that the butterflies do not nectar often, spending most of their time in the thick grasses. I saw several individuals in Johnston County in 2000 nectaring on Coastal Sweet-pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), but I agree with Sullivan that the species seems to nectar less frequently than do most other marsh skipper species.

COMMENTS: In 1997, this species was discovered in three new counties. I found a small colony in Harnett County, plus a female in Vance County in the Piedmont. Bo Sullivan discovered a large colony in a wet savanna at Holly Shelter Game Land in Pender County. In 1994, he found several in a wet powerline clearing in Craven County, where he also found a Berry's Skipper. In 2005, observers found the species in Harnett, Gates, and Brunswick counties, representing two new sites. Jeff Pippen and I discovered a good colony in a wet powerline clearing in Harnett County; interestingly, the skippers were nectaring on Slender Blue Iris (*Iris prismatica*), which also is very rare in NC. Ted Wilcox and Will Cook discovered the first record for the species in the NC Mountains, at the same site (and date) where they found Long Dash. Wilcox later added two new sites in the Mountains. The species was remarkably numerous at the "Long Dash site", with Jeff Pippen and John Dole counting about 20 individuals on July 1. The first new county records for the Coastal Plain in perhaps ten years were made in 2013. Ed Corey photographed one at a Voice of America site in Pitt County on May 30, quickly followed by one photographed by Nick Flanders along a ditch in Northampton County on June 2. Miles Buddy photographed one in Beaufort County in 2023; this is the first new county record in ten years. Some of these sites, however, have either been lost to habitat destruction or failure to keep the habitat in an herbaceous condition.

Fresh individuals are stunning below, with white fringes, veins, anal margin to the hind wing, and lower body color. Females are fairly tame and nectar often, but males tend to perch on vegetation, are wary, and seemingly do not spend much time nectaring.