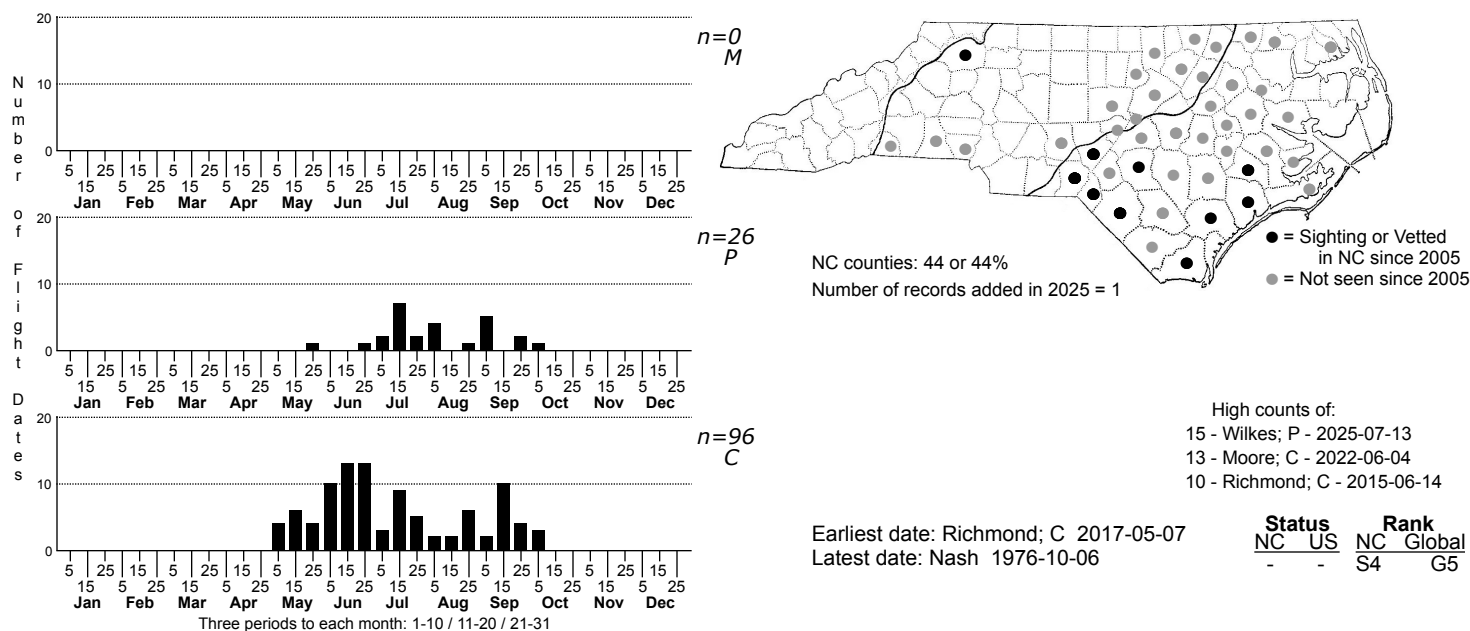


## *Enallagma weewa* Blackwater Bluet



**DISTRIBUTION:** Nearly throughout the Coastal Plain, and the extreme eastern and southern Piedmont. Absent from the mountains, and essentially absent from the northwestern half of the Piedmont, though a shocking photograph in 2021 documented the species from Wilkes County. Perhaps absent in a few counties in the northeastern Coastal Plain, such as those around Albemarle Sound.

**ABUNDANCE:** Though recorded from most Coastal Plain and lower Piedmont counties, suggesting that it isn't rare, there are relatively few recent reports, and just a modest number of photographs. Seems to be uncommon and overlooked within the range (if not also declining) -- at least in the southern portion of the Coastal Plain (where most recent records have been made). Certainly, rare in the Piedmont portion of the range, as (despite many observers in the Triangle region) there are no recent records from this province.

**FLIGHT:** In the Coastal Plain, the flight occurs from early May to early October, and the Piedmont flight is similar, though the earliest record is from late May.

**HABITAT:** Unusual for a damselfly: as the name suggests, it is found around blackwater (acidic) streams, rarely around larger rivers and lakes, but again with tannic (acidic) waters. However, several recent records have been at margins of lakes and ponds (in the Sandhills, where waters are acidic).

**BEHAVIOR:** Both sexes tend to stay in shade in vegetation along the banks of streams -- very hard for an observer to spot. And they seem to be less active than most other bluets, only infrequently perching on a twig or other perch over the water. Males often perch on grasses or other shaded vegetation about a foot or two off the water, along the stream bank -- often in a vertical or diagonal position.

**COMMENTS:** It seems remarkable that Cuyler, and possibly others, have collected the species from 40 or more counties, yet there are relatively few recent observations. This scarcity of recent records is likely due to the fact that few observers look for odonates along blackwater streams; most field work is done around ponds, lakes, and larger creeks and rivers. Certainly a species that has been recorded (collected) in ecologically "impoverished" counties such as Edgecombe, Wilson, Greene, Lenoir, and Duplin cannot be that scarce. There are barely 10-12 photographs available (so far) for the species in NC, and none as yet from the northern half of the Coastal Plain or eastern Piedmont.

As there were no reports at all statewide in 2019 and 2020, the State Rank has been adjusted upward to a less common S4, instead of S5. Perhaps the species is indeed declining, and not just being overlooked or difficult to survey; however, blackwater creeks and rivers have not been impacted much by development or agriculture in recent decades.