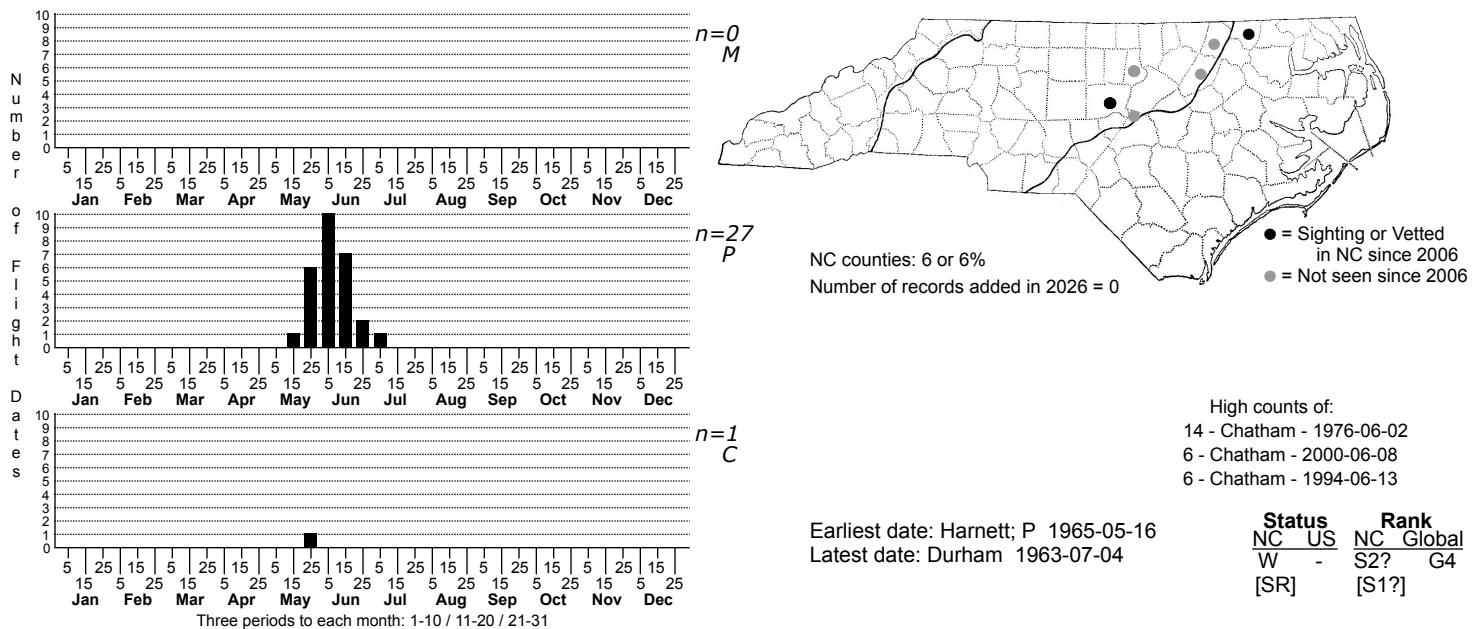


Neurocordulia virginiensis Cinnamon Shadowdragon



DISTRIBUTION: A puzzling range in NC, so far as known, based on its "wide" overall global range. Known at present only from a handful of counties in the northeastern Piedmont -- west only to Durham and Chatham counties, and east to the Fall Line separating the Piedmont from the Coastal Plain. As this is a mostly Southern species, ranging north to southern Virginia, the near complete lack of Coastal Plain records is striking or puzzling (though its preferred habitat is mostly absent from the NC Coastal Plain). A new county record (in 2013), for Northampton County, lies along the Fall Line, at Weldon. This record was added to the Coastal Plain flight chart on the PDF page; however, this record could just as easily have been included in the Piedmont flight chart. Several exuviae collected in the Haw River in Chatham County in 2022 were confirmed by an expert and at least indicates that the species is still present in the state.

ABUNDANCE: Perhaps declining. Seemingly rare to uncommon (and perhaps fairly common at one or two sites, at least formerly) in NC, but as this and other species of shadowdragons are crepuscular, determining the range and abundance is very difficult. Oddly, Dunkle (2000) calls the species "common" in its range, but Beaton (2007) calls it "probably uncommon" in GA. The fact that at least 14 individuals were collected in a single day at a Chatham County site suggests that it might be -- or might have been in the past -- numerous in a few places within its narrow NC range.

FLIGHT: The flight in NC occurs from mid-May to early July.

HABITAT: This is a riverine species, occurring at larger, clean ones with riffles. This preferred habitat precludes occurrence in most of the Coastal Plain, with its slow-moving rivers generally devoid of rocks and riffles, but this habitat is widespread across the Piedmont, and so far all known records are near the Fall Line of the eastern Piedmont/extreme western Coastal Plain.

BEHAVIOR: As with other shadowdragons, adults perch inconspicuously on twigs in the shade of forests during the day, emerging during the last hour of light to forage near rivers. Beaton (2007) mentions that the species is more likely than other shadowdragons to forage away from its breeding habitat (i.e., away from water).

COMMENTS: Based on records from throughout its range on the OdonataCentral website, it seems that there is a FL bias in Dunkle's (2000) considering the species to be "common". A "common" status seems to be true in FL and probably AL, but there are just two counties of occurrence shown on the website for each of GA, SC, TN, and VA. Thus, the six counties known for NC is not out of line, and the Cinnamon Shadowdragon clearly is a rare to very uncommon dragonfly north of FL, and is much less numerous than the Umber Shadowdragon (which occurs with it in the NC Piedmont) north of FL. Despite there being fewer than 30 records with dates available, the N.C. Natural Heritage Program moved the species from the Rare List to the Watch List in 2012, as it wants more data on twilight survey efforts for shadowdragons before it considers any to be truly rare.

Sadly, with hardly any new records in recent years, it seems best for this species to be moved back to the Rare List as Significantly Rare. And the State Rank should be moved up to a rarer S1?, or possibly S1S2. Certainly, the extremely few recent records is related to very few crepuscular surveys with long nets, but a species this seemingly scarce should be monitored in a database now. In late 2020, The N.C. Natural Heritage Program remained conservative, and kept the species on its Watch List for now, but did move the State Rank to a rarer S2?.