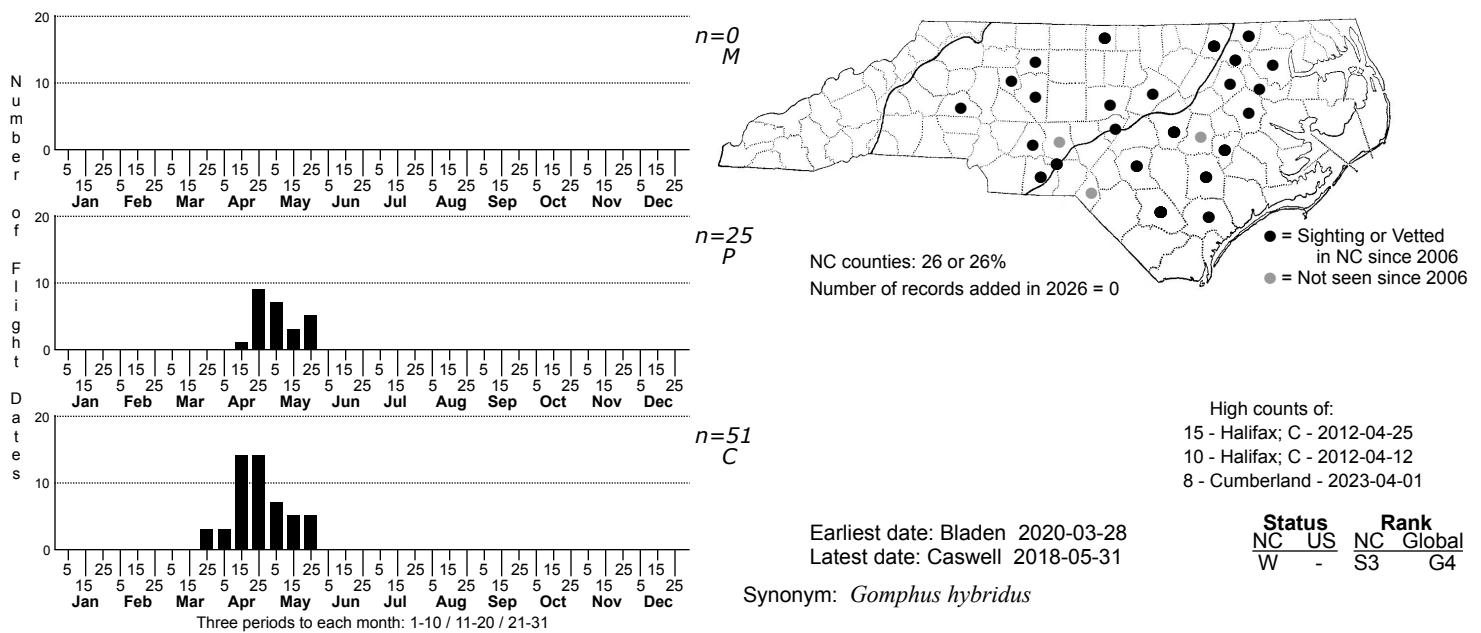


## *Gomphurus hybridus* Cocoa Clubtail



**DISTRIBUTION:** Present over much of the central and western Coastal Plain and eastern/central portion of the Piedmont, but with large gaps in the range (such as the well-studied northeastern Piedmont). The range in the Coastal Plain is expanding northward, as many new records came from the Roanoke River area in 2012; the species was previously known northward only to the Neuse River area. In fact, until 2013, Virginia had no records; however, there are now five records for the southeastern and central parts of that state. A number of new records have also been made in the Piedmont in recent years, including first county records for Richmond and Forsyth in 2019, Anson in 2020, and our westernmost county in Catawba in 2021. Thus, it seems that the species is expanding the range westward into the Piedmont, as well as moving northward in the Coastal Plain. Still, the lack of records for the northeastern Piedmont is puzzling, as this is a highly worked area of the state, though a few records should be made there in the next handful of years.

**ABUNDANCE:** Common, at least locally, along the upper part of the Roanoke River (Halifax and Northampton counties). Uncommon and local in the central and southern parts of the Coastal Plain, but rare and local in the Piedmont portion of the range. Dunkle (2000) considers the species to be fairly common, whereas in GA Beaton (2007) say it is uncommon in the Coastal Plain but rare elsewhere.

**FLIGHT:** Spring season only; the known dates in NC range from 28 March to 31 May. The flight is earlier in the Coastal Plain, starting in late March, whereas the first Piedmont records are not until late April.

**HABITAT:** Large or medium rivers with silty or sandy bottoms. Most sites are along brownwater rivers, but a few have been at blackwater sites.

**BEHAVIOR:** Males spend little time in flight patrols over the water. Teneral individuals, as well as adults, often forage hundreds of yards away from rivers, such as along clearings, dirt tracks, and forest openings. It is an unwary species and can be easily approached on the ground.

**COMMENTS:** This is one of the relatively few clubtails to be found along slow-moving rivers and large creeks in the Coastal Plain. (The majority of clubtails are found in the mountains and Piedmont, and near faster waters.) Steve Hall and Harry LeGrand found it commonly on several spring dates in 2012 at sites within 1/2-mile of the Roanoke River, for a notable northward range extension. As it has been found in VA in 2013, 2016, and 2017, it is obviously moving northward.

The species is still on the NC Natural Heritage Program Watch List, but as it is clearly moving northward, if not also westward into the central Piedmont, it is uncertain if it will remain on that list. As there are now 57 records (with dates) as of 2022, the species probably no longer needs to remain on the Watch List.