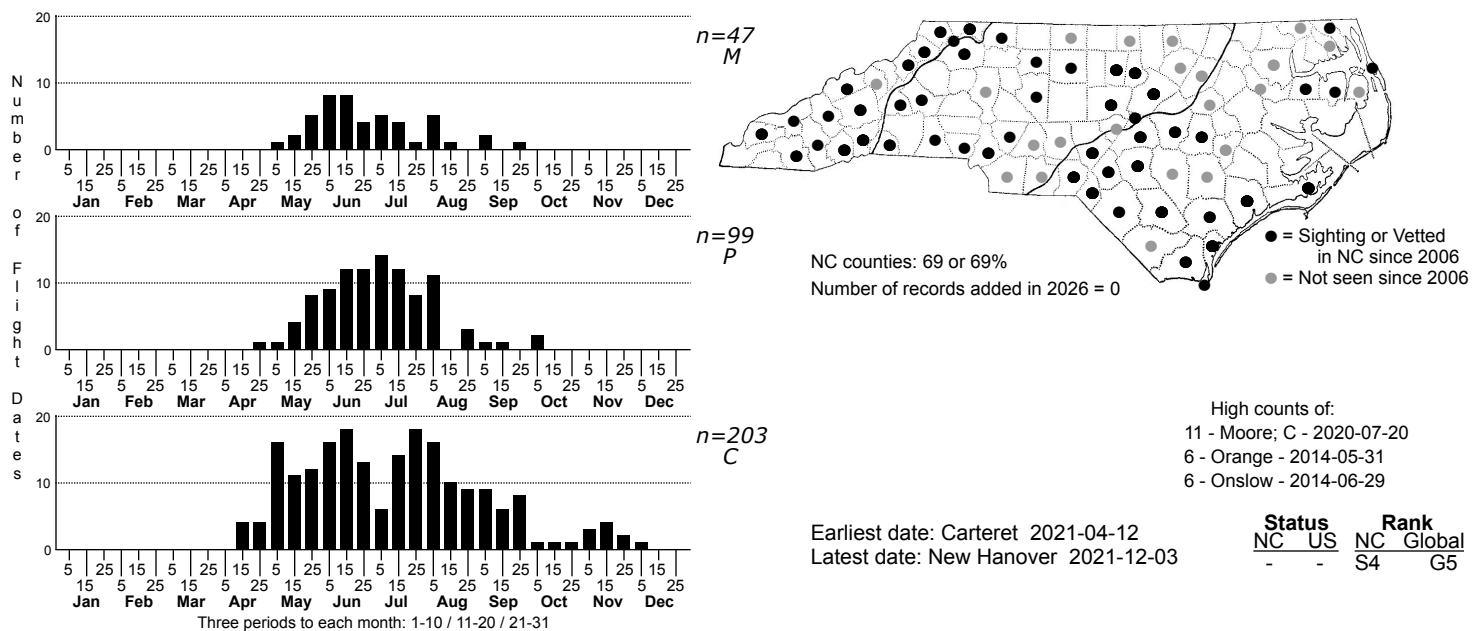


Anax longipes Comet Darner



DISTRIBUTION: Statewide, though more widespread in the southern half of the Coastal Plain and southeastern part of the Piedmont. Of spotty occurrence in most of the Piedmont and mountains, and the northern half of the Coastal Plain, though likely occurs in all 100 counties. In recent years, there have been many more records for the mountains, and thus relatively few counties in this province lack records now.

ABUNDANCE: Widespread but mostly uncommon (though not hard to see just one) across the southern half of the Coastal Plain and most of the Piedmont and mountains. Rare to uncommon in the northern Coastal Plain, where few recent records -- scarcity of observers there? Even though it is not a rare species, we are aware of only a single daily count of more than six individuals; one observer counted 11 of them in 2020. In general, most numerous in the southern Coastal Plain, including the Sandhills.

FLIGHT: In the Coastal Plain, generally from mid-April to late November. Flies at least from early May to early October in the Piedmont and to late September in the mountains.

HABITAT: Mainly small to medium ponds, including natural ones such as limesink ponds and Carolina bays.

BEHAVIOR: Most often seen (a male) patrolling back and forth over a pond, typically about 3-6 feet above the water. At times seen over dry land, but best looked for over a pond/small lake. A male is quite territorial, and thus it is not hard to see a single male patrolling over a pond, but unlike with most other pond dragonflies, you might not see any other males at the pond!

COMMENTS: Males, with their bright red abdomen contrasting with the green head and thorax, are among our most beautiful and easily identified dragonflies. Its large size also adds to its striking appearance. Females and immatures can easily be confused with Common Green Darner, and probably cannot be safely identified while in flight. In fact, a green-bodied dragonfly with a rusty-brown abdomen seen flying over a field is more likely a female/immature Common Green Darner than a Comet Darner.