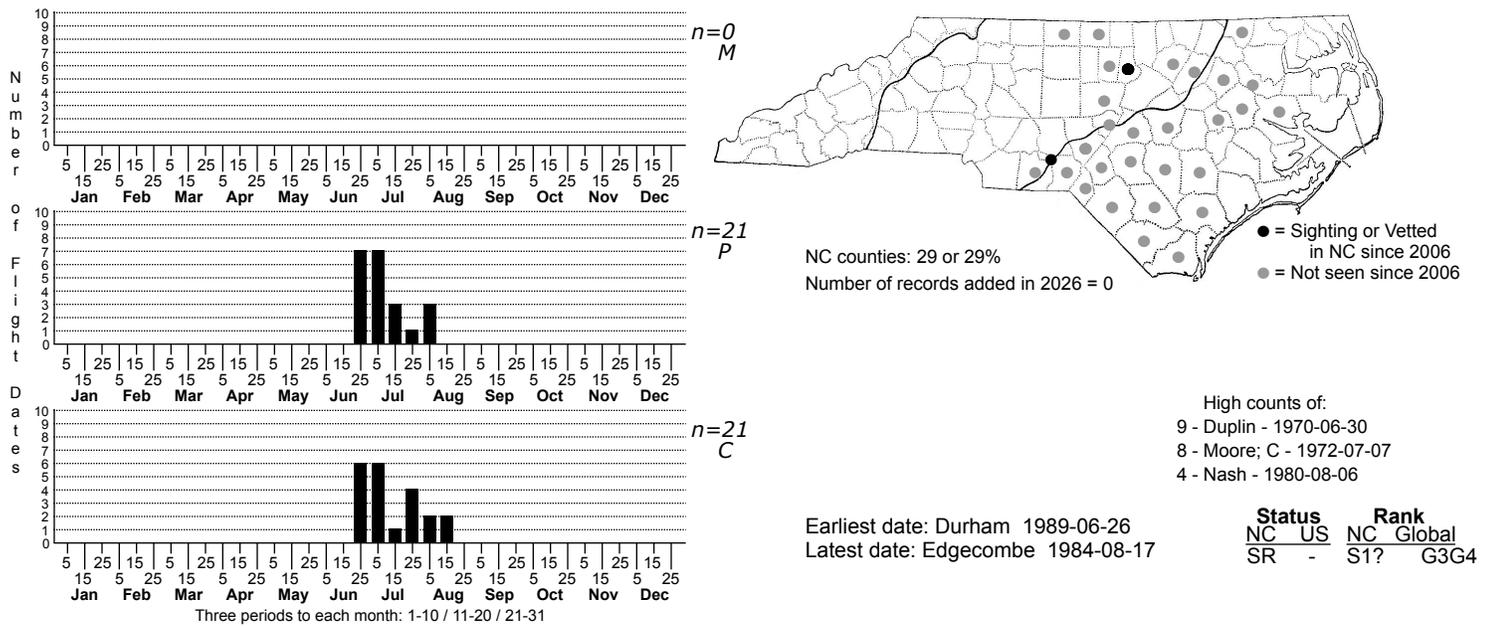


## *Somatochlora georgiana* Coppery Emerald



**DISTRIBUTION:** Present (at least formerly) over the eastern Piedmont and western 2/3rds of the Coastal Plain. Ranges west to Rockingham and Anson counties; and east to Northampton, Beaufort, and Pender counties. It seems to be absent in the far eastern counties, as well as in the western half of the Piedmont and the mountains.

**ABUNDANCE:** Puzzling. Most references consider this to be a rare species, yet the great number of counties recorded in NC suggest otherwise. Hardly any biologist alive in NC seems to be familiar with the species, as there are no NC photos on websites and no recent observations. It has been recorded in 29 NC counties, but just one in VA, three in SC, and two in GA (OdonataCentral range map, 2022). Undoubtedly the species has also declined in recent decades, as a species this "widespread" and not overly difficult to identify should certainly have been found in the last 20 years. Finally, in 2020, one was found caught in a spider web in Durham County in late July 2020! Note that this 2020 individual had some odd markings not typical of most Coppery Emeralds; most experts agreed on the identification as this species, with such "caveats", but one was unsure as to which *Somatochlora* species it truly is (see photo caption below). Despite what the map shows, this is clearly a rare species in NC today.

**FLIGHT:** The NC flight occurs between late June and mid-August.

**HABITAT:** Creeks and other slow-moving acidic streams, in forested areas.

**BEHAVIOR:** Adults are somewhat secretive. They are most frequently seen flying 30 or more feet above ground, in late afternoon. They perch on twigs, but often well above ground. Males can sometimes be seen patrolling over streams.

**COMMENTS:** Exactly why there are so many more records for NC than in practically any other state -- just about half of all county records known are from NC (!) -- is not known. Despite it being colored like no other dragonfly, and should be obvious when seen, it is clearly not often encountered except with a purposeful search (such as near dusk), or with long nets to catch high-flying dragonflies. Because there has been just one recent record, the NC Natural Heritage Program has moved the species from its Watch List to the Rare List in 2012. We agree with Paulson (2011): "This is one of our rarest dragonflies, very seldom encountered in most of its range." Some enlightenment on this mysterious species was made by Chris Hill, who netted and collected one in Horry County, SC, on 25 June 2015 (OdonataCentral photo and data). He indicated that the species is very hard to capture; and this seems to support the fact that Cuyler had only sight records for Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Harnett, Lee, Northampton, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties, as mentioned in a paper in the *Bulletin of American Odonatology* (Vol. 2, issue 2).

The State Rank has been moved in 2020 to S1? -- still just one record in nearly 30 years, but ought to be present farther south. Maybe the solution to finding this species is to "erect" more spider webs?!