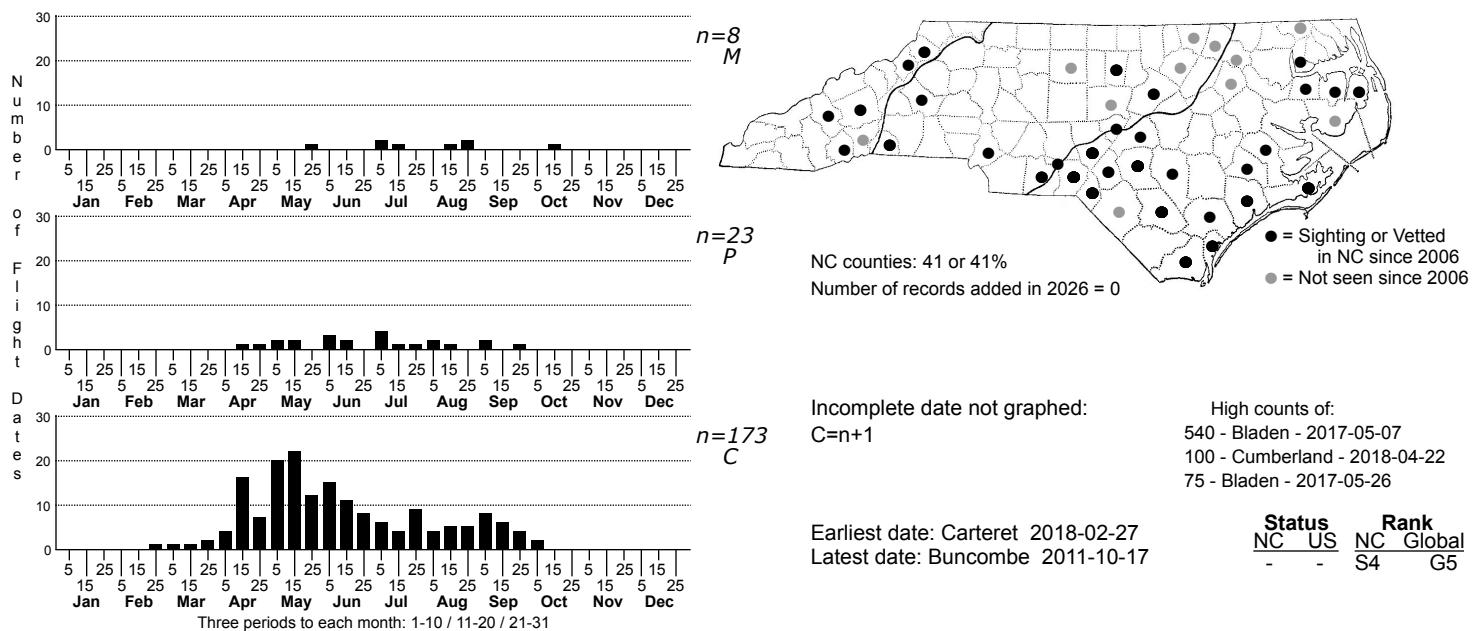


Ischnura kellicotti Lilypad Forktail



DISTRIBUTION: Spottily distributed over most of the Coastal Plain and the eastern third of the Piedmont; also sparingly in the mountains and foothills. Many gaps in the range (records for less than half of the counties within the Coastal Plain and Piedmont portion of the range). Might be truly absent in some counties in the western Piedmont and parts of the mountains.

ABUNDANCE: Uncommon to locally common in the Sandhills and at Suggs Millpond (= Horseshoe Lake) in Bladen County. Rare to locally uncommon elsewhere in the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont. Rare in the foothills/mountain part of the range. Ought to be present in the western parts of the Piedmont and at least the lower mountain counties.

FLIGHT: In the Coastal Plain, it occurs from early March to early October. The Piedmont flight occurs from mid-May (and likely earlier) to late September. The few mountain dates fall from late May to mid-October, surprisingly late.

HABITAT: As the common name implies, it is essentially found only at lakes or ponds with lily pads.

BEHAVIOR: Adults can be identified by their habit of curving the abdomen such that the club touches the lily pad. Note, however, that male Skimming Bluets, quite similar-looking to male Lilypad Forktails, also will bend their abdomen down to a lily pad. You may need to take a photo of your damselfly to be certain. (And, male Cherry Bluets also perch on lily pads, and can be mistaken for immature female Lilypad Forktails.)

COMMENTS: There is much opportunity for biologists to "fill in the holes" in the range map with new county records. In fact, several new county records were added in 2016 and 2017, and a mountain county (Avery) was added in 2021. Additional new counties were added in 2022. The species is considered to be "Common below the Fall Line" in GA (Beaton 2007), and in NC it can be at least locally quite common at a few lakes and ponds in the southern Coastal Plain/Sandhills.

The number of recent records, as compared with those older collection records by Cuyler, suggests that the species is likely increasing in numbers and range in the state. A few other species, typically those of man-made lakes and ponds (e.g., Two-striped Forktail, Roseate Skimmer), also show this pattern of certain increase and/or spreading inland. The State Rank was thus moved by the N.C. Natural Heritage Program from S3S4 to S4 a few years ago.