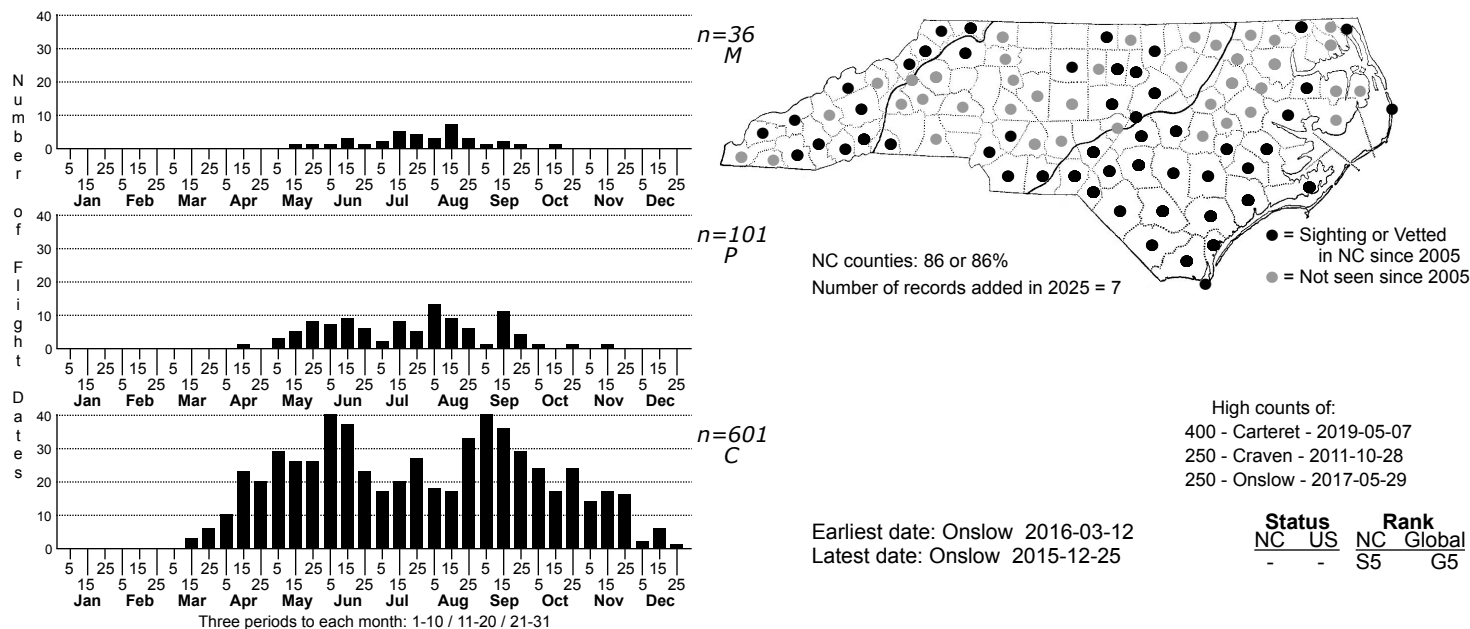


Erythrodiplax minuscula Little Blue Dragonlet



DISTRIBUTION: Statewide, and probably occurring in all 100 counties. However, distribution is somewhat spotty in the western half of the Piedmont, probably owing to its inconspicuous behavior and tiny size, making it hard to encounter where not numerous.

ABUNDANCE: Easily overlooked because of its tiny size and inconspicuous behavior, and thus is much more numerous in reality than observations may suggest. Numerous (common) in the southern half of the Coastal Plain (Sandhills east to Croatan National Forest in Craven/Carteret counties); only fairly common in the northern Coastal Plain. Uncommon in the eastern half of the Piedmont, but rare to uncommon in the western Piedmont and mountains.

FLIGHT: A very long flight season. In the Coastal Plain from mid-March to late December, though not numerous until mid-May and after the end of November. The Piedmont flight is somewhat shortened -- from early May (rarely in April) to mid-November, but rare after late September. In the mountains, it is mainly from mid-May to late September.

HABITAT: Ponds, lakes, marshes, and slower portions of rivers, typically places in full or partial sun.

BEHAVIOR: Next to the Elfin Skimmer, which is even smaller, this species is the most inconspicuous dragonfly that frequents open fields, powerline clearings, savannas, and other sunny places. Adults perch low in vegetation, often down in grasses and forbs, and make short flights, often barely above one's ankles.

COMMENTS: Males can be confused with the larger Eastern Pondhawk or slightly larger Blue Dasher, or with the slightly smaller Elfin Skimmer, and females can also be confusing to beginners. People who spend much time looking at wildflowers in savannas and powerline clearings become familiar with this species, as its favored foraging areas tend to be such diverse, moist herbaceous areas.