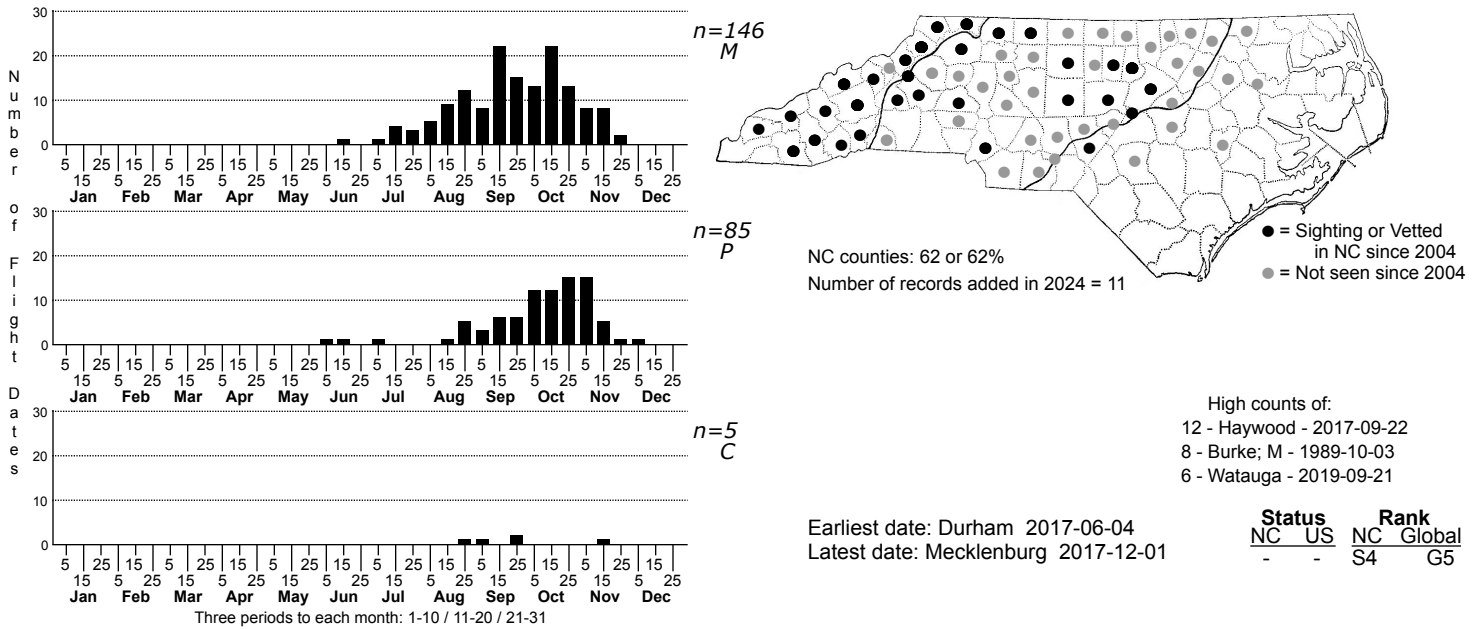


Aeshna umbrosa Shadow Darner



DISTRIBUTION: Essentially in the mountains and Piedmont, and sparingly in the western third of the Coastal Plain (at least formerly), including the Sandhills region (documented with a 2020 photo).

ABUNDANCE: Fairly common in the mountains, rare to uncommon over most of the Piedmont, and very rare in the western Coastal Plain. However, abundance is somewhat difficult to assess, as the species often flies in late afternoon and near dusk, in shaded parts of forests. Also, it flies late in the season, when much odonate field work has subsided. Found in most counties within the range in the state. It is certainly not nearly as numerous or conspicuous as most darners of the spring and early summer seasons; however, it is one of the few darners that is more numerous in the mountains than it is downstate.

FLIGHT: Because this is a late summer/fall species, the mountain flight occurs somewhat earlier than the flights downstate. In the mountains it occurs mainly from early July to mid-November, peaking in September and October, with a few records even to late November. In the Piedmont the flight is later, mainly from late August to mid-November, and possibly into late November. However, there are records in the mountains and Piedmont as early as mid-June. The few flight dates from the Coastal Plain are from late August to late September, and one in mid-November; oddly, there are no October reports from this province, though it is very rare there.

HABITAT: The vicinity of ponds, lake shores, marshes, and small streams, generally near wooded areas, but it can occur in open areas. Seldom seen near fields or areas far from water.

BEHAVIOR: Rather secretive, often staying in shady places. Can fly over small open areas, darting back and forth, but usually only in late afternoon.

COMMENTS: Of the "common" dragonflies in the state (collected/reported in over 60% of the counties), this is not a well known species to many observers, as it is rather scarce or hard to find in the Piedmont. Unlike other darners, it seldom flies around open areas, fields, or ponds during the morning or early afternoon hours; it keeps more to shaded areas and later times of the day for flying.