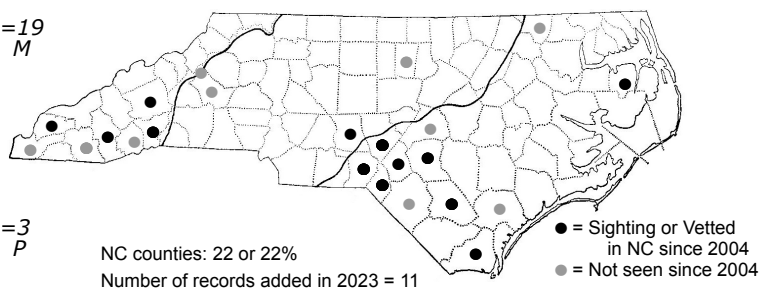
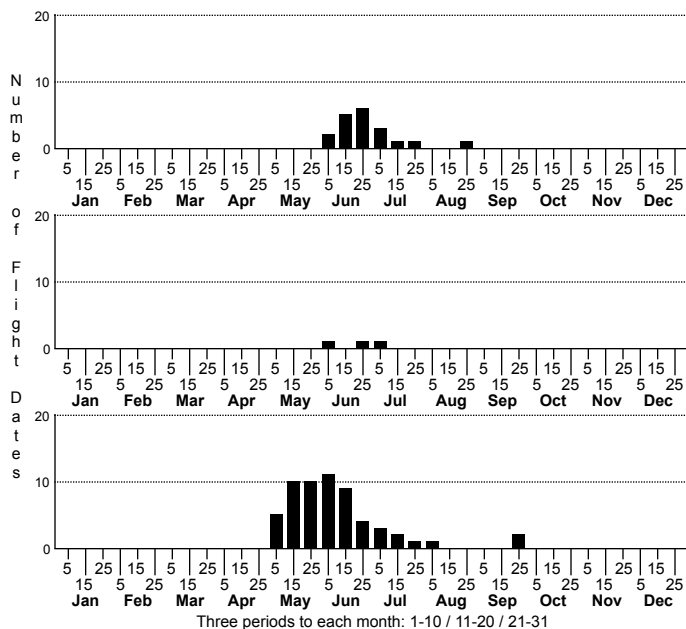


# *Nehalennia gracilis* Sphagnum Sprite



Incomplete date not graphed:  
M=n+1

High counts of:  
41 - Henderson - 1941-06-17  
30 - Moore; C - 2013-06-12  
21 - Richmond; C - 2022-05-28

Earliest date: Scotland 2017-05-07  
Latest date: Pender 1976-09-24

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S3	G5

**DISTRIBUTION:** Primarily the southern Coastal Plain, including the Sandhills region, as well as the southern mountains. Otherwise, very widely scattered over the state, though mainly in the southern part of the state. There are no records yet for the northern half of the mountains, nearly all of the Piedmont, and nearly all of the northern Coastal Plain. A photo from Tyrrell County in 2014 filled in a large gap in the range in the eastern part of the state; and a photo from Buncombe County -- taken in 2011 but not posted to this website until 2020 -- "moved" the mountain range slightly northward.

**ABUNDANCE:** Oddly geographically bimodal, being more numerous in the Coastal Plain and the southern mountains than in the Piedmont. Uncommon to very locally fairly common in the Sandhills and in the southern mountains. Very rare to rare elsewhere, mainly in the southern Coastal Plain east of the Sandhills.

**FLIGHT:** The Coastal Plain records fall from early May to late September, whereas those from the mountains are from early June to late August. The very few (three) records from the Piedmont are confined from early June to early July, though certainly the flight is much wider than this. Most of the flight is finished by the end of July.

**HABITAT:** Typically where sphagnum moss is present around seeps and other boggy spots, such as some pond margins.

**BEHAVIOR:** Males fly slowly above the sphagnum and other vegetation, often a foot or two off the ground, and can perch somewhat conspicuously on a bare twig (though usually in light shade). The similar Southern Sprite, a shorter species, tends to stay somewhat closer to thick vegetation than does a Sphagnum Sprite. Both can occur in the same sites; thus, care must be taken to correctly identify a Sphagnum Sprite.

**COMMENTS:** Because of the sparse array of county records across much of the state, range maps in reference books tend to incorrectly show all of NC within the range of the species, which is more common in states to our north than to our south. Though not one of our rarest damselflies, it is one of our rarest away from its Sandhills stronghold. As it is not on the N.C. Natural Heritage Program's Watch List, that fact and its locally numerous status meant that was it was recently moved from S2S3 to a less scarce S3.