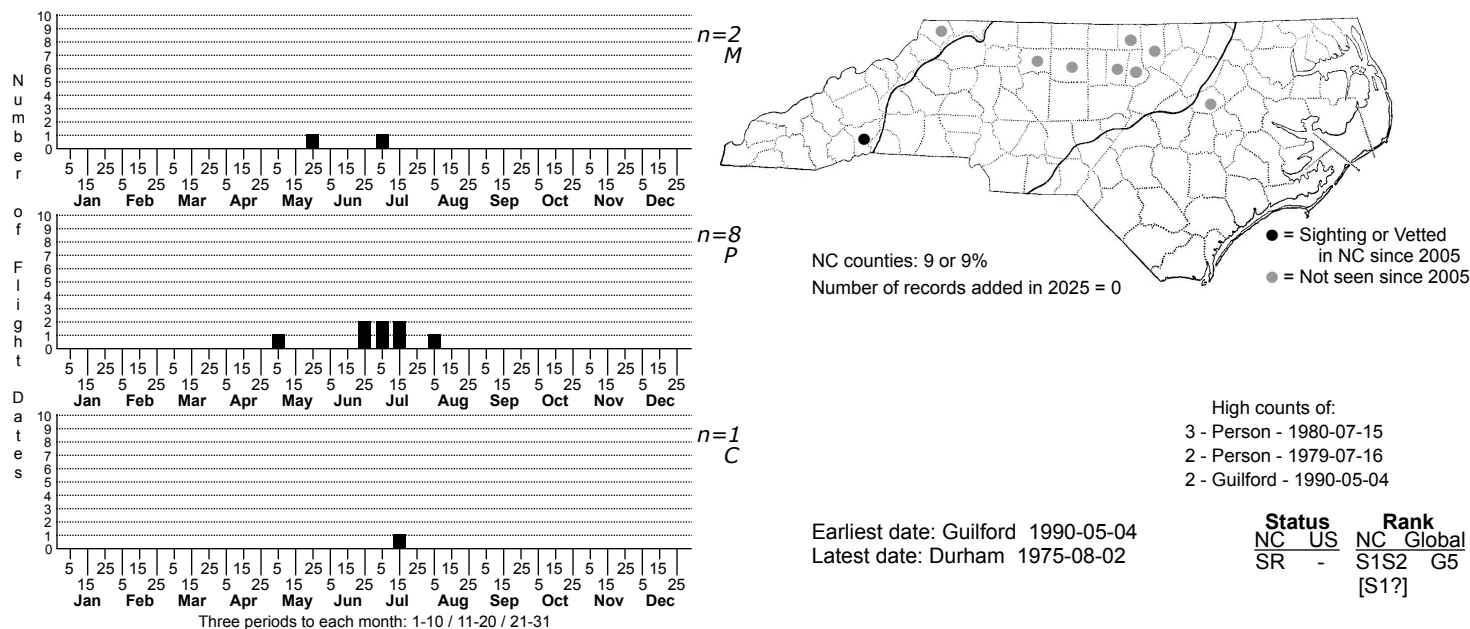


Lestes forcipatus Sweetflag Spreadwing



DISTRIBUTION: This is a northern species whose range extends south only to NC, TN, and northern GA. In the state, it was thought to be limited to the northern third of the state, in the northern mountains and northern Piedmont, with an odd disjunct record for Wilson County. However, "srmymers" photographed a female at a park in Henderson County, in late May 2024. Thus, the range presumably occurs south -- at least in the mountains -- to the SC/GA border.

ABUNDANCE: Rare or overlooked. Very rare or rare in the Piedmont and the mountains, and presumed extremely rare in the northwestern Coastal Plain. However, the species is quite similar to other spreadwings, and thus is presumably overlooked, as well. It is hoped that more photographs of spreadwings can be posted to iNaturalist (as was the Henderson County one) or other places where experts can review them for proper species identification.

FLIGHT: The Piedmont flight in NC is from early May to early August. The two records (a sight report and a photo one) for the mountains are for late May and early July, whereas the single one for the Coastal Plain is for mid-July.

HABITAT: Ponds and lakes with emergent vegetation, even in small pools.

BEHAVIOR: Probably similar to most other spreadwings, along pond margins. However, as hardly anyone alive has seen the species in NC, it is probably inconspicuous, not to mention quite rare and difficult to identify without detailed photos.

COMMENTS: For a number of years, the N.C. Natural Heritage Program has kept the species on its Watch List instead of moving it to the Rare List, but in 2020 that program has moved the species to its Significantly Rare list. It is always disappointing to have to make this move, but with essentially no recent reports, there seemed to be no choice. However, the set of five photos from Henderson County in 2024 is the first state record since 2004! And, this seems to represent the first photographic documentation of this species in the state, as well. The State Rank is suggested to be moved up to S1? from S1S2. Thankfully, there is no need now to consider a move to SH (Historical), owing to the 2024 record posted to iNaturalist (and also to this website).