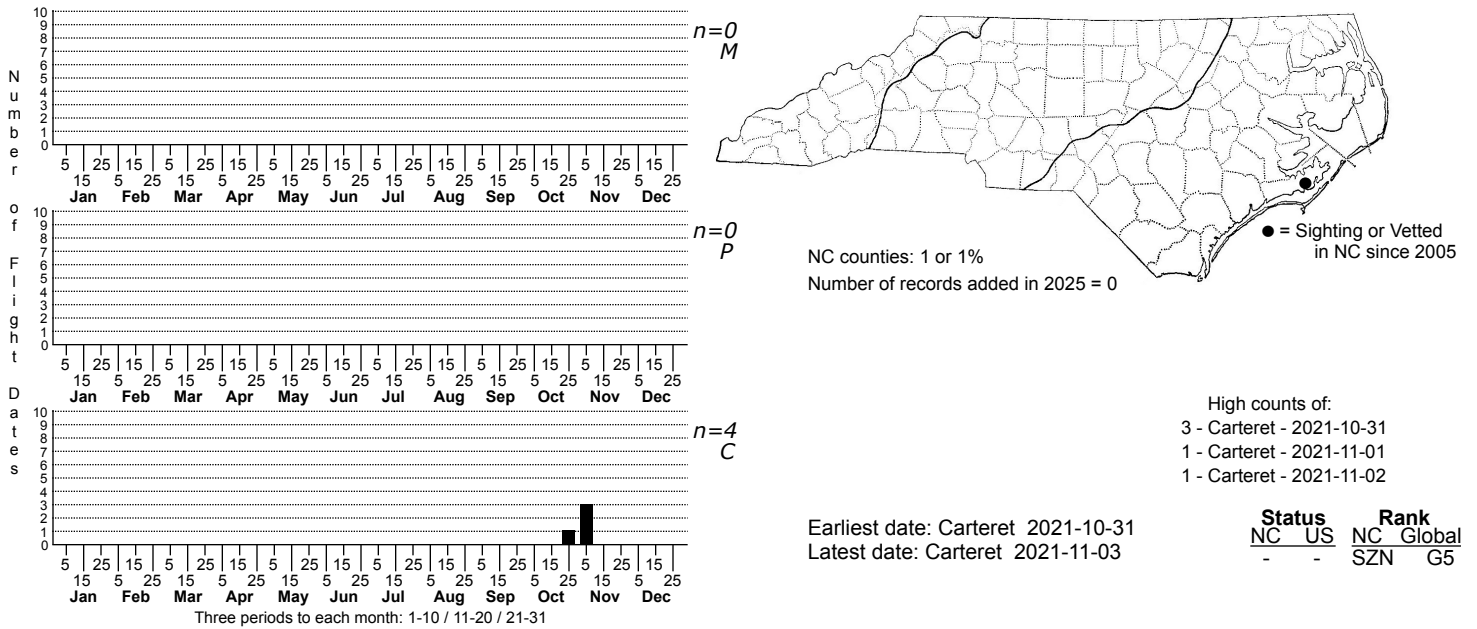


Gynacantha nervosa Twilight Darner



DISTRIBUTION: Recorded only from Carteret County, first found in 2021, on 31 October. (One was found dead on pavement at the NC Zoo in Randolph County, on 9 September 2022, with the photograph on iNaturalist. It seems likely that this individual hitched a ride on a vehicle coming from outside NC and did not fly there on its own, as this is a major tourist attraction. Thus, the editors are not adding the record to this database.) This is a species of Tropical America, from South America north to Mexico, through the West Indies, and north in the Eastern states only to FL and barely to southeastern GA. Vagrants have been recorded from eastern OK, eastern AL, northern DE, and coastal SC -- and now coastal NC.

ABUNDANCE: Accidental stray. Presumed to have arrived with strong southerly winds from a low pressure system passing NC in late October 2021.

FLIGHT: Though it flies all year in FL and southward, in GA the records are only for the fall season. Expected in the Carolinas only in fall, and most likely along or near the coast.

HABITAT: Mainly in wooded ponds and swampy areas, within its primary range.

BEHAVIOR: Forages essentially at dusk, near wooded edges. According to Paulson (2011) "Commonly enters buildings after dusk flight and may be found next morning". The fact that Randy Newman discovered three (!) individuals in early morning on the side of the Fort Macon State Park visitor's center is thus not quite as surprising as originally thought, given that it often roosts at night near man-made structures (as well as in forests on branches and twigs).

COMMENTS: Though not quite as stunning a discovery as Brian Bockhahn's photographing a Blue-eyed Darner in coastal NC in December 2020 -- a species of the Western half of the country, this discovery of three Twilight Darners at a single time is quite a shock! In addition, Newman found one on the side of the building on the next morning -- 1 November; and Mark Shields traveled a short distance on a successful "odonate chase" to photograph one still there on 2 November, as did Hunter Phillips on 3 November. In addition to several recent fall records of Variegated Meadowhawks at several sites along the coast in 2019, and a few recent coastal fall records of Striped Saddlebags and Red Saddlebags -- additional strays, these findings clearly indicate a need for more odonate field work along the coast, especially along the southern half, in the fall season to uncover additional records of strays. The Twilight Darner becomes the 189th odonate species found in NC.