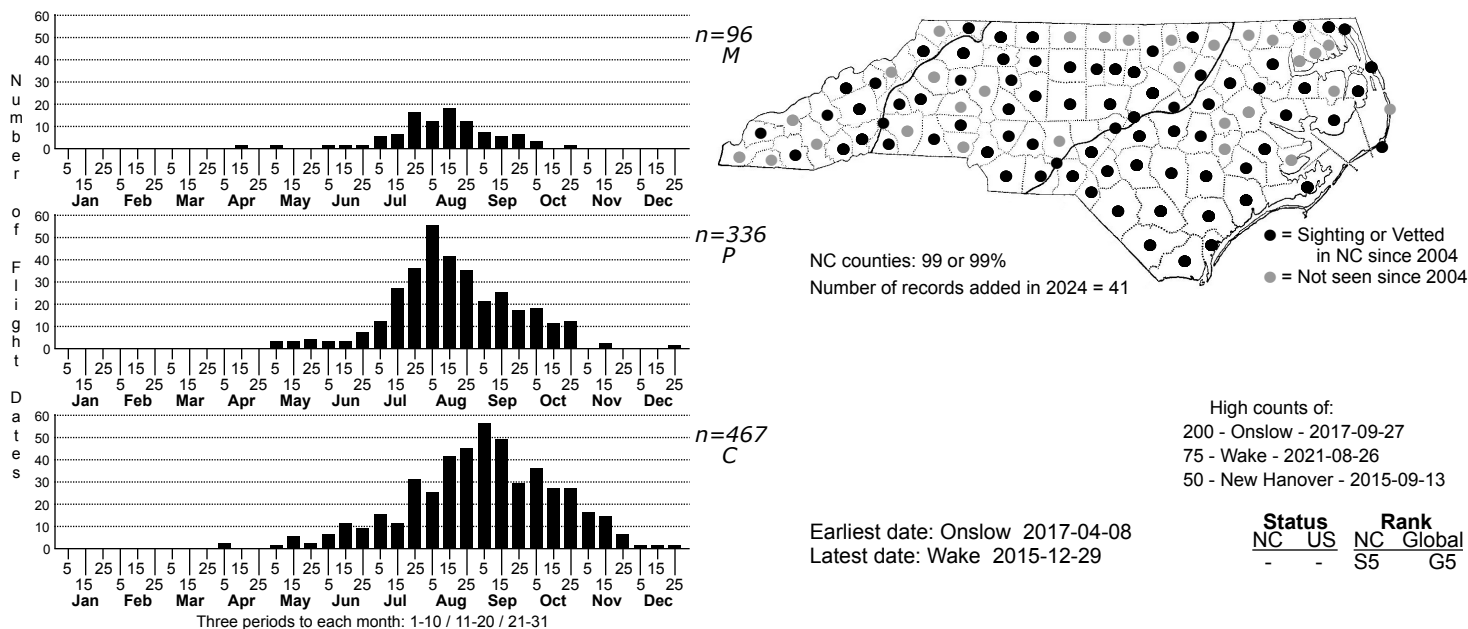


Pantala flavescens Wandering Glider



DISTRIBUTION: Essentially statewide, but not as widespread in the mountains as downstate. Presumed to occur in all 100 counties.

ABUNDANCE: A widespread species, seen often during the year, especially during the fall season. Abundance is difficult to assess or describe, as it is migratory and does not establish permanent colonies, though generally common across the state (but barely just fairly common in the mountains), being somewhat more numerous in the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont than farther westward. Observers frequently see individuals in cities and towns, attempting to lay eggs on shiny car hoods; however, large numbers are seldom seen in a given day, and it is often missed in field work in "the country". Seems to be most often seen along or near the coast in the fall, migrating southward (presumably).

FLIGHT: Downstate, from early May to early December, most frequently reported in mid-summer and fall, though the highest numbers of individuals are seen from late August to late September. There is even a record for late December. In the mountains, the flight is mainly from early June to early October.

HABITAT: Unlike all other dragonflies except the related Spot-winged Glider, it uses small, temporary puddles and pools for depositing eggs. These can be rainwater pools on city streets, as well as puddles in powerline clearings and other ephemeral ponds.

BEHAVIOR: Only the two gliders (*Pantala*) share the "wandering" habit of foraging. Males may patrol temporary pools where eggs have been laid, and females (of course) can be seen ovipositing in such temporary pools. However, they spend most of their time in wide-ranging flights, often 5-10 feet or higher, over all types of open country, from fields, marshes, towns, dunes, and even offshore! Like swallows and swifts, these dragonflies seldom seem to perch, but when found hanging from a twig, they can be somewhat unwary.

COMMENTS: Wandering Gliders can literally be seen anywhere, from downtown streets to over the Gulf Stream. Because they are constantly on the wing, identification can be difficult, and often one must assume that an amber-colored dragonfly, with no obvious wing markings (to rule out saddlebags, for example), is a Wandering Glider -- especially if seen close to the coast in the fall. A range map for this species is a bit misleading, as it is a hit-and-run type of breeder, with no site fidelity.