

Stylurus scudderi Zebra Clubtail

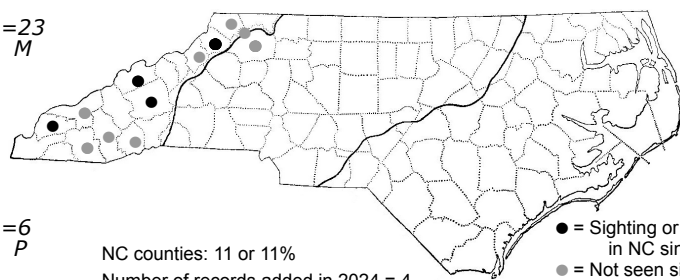
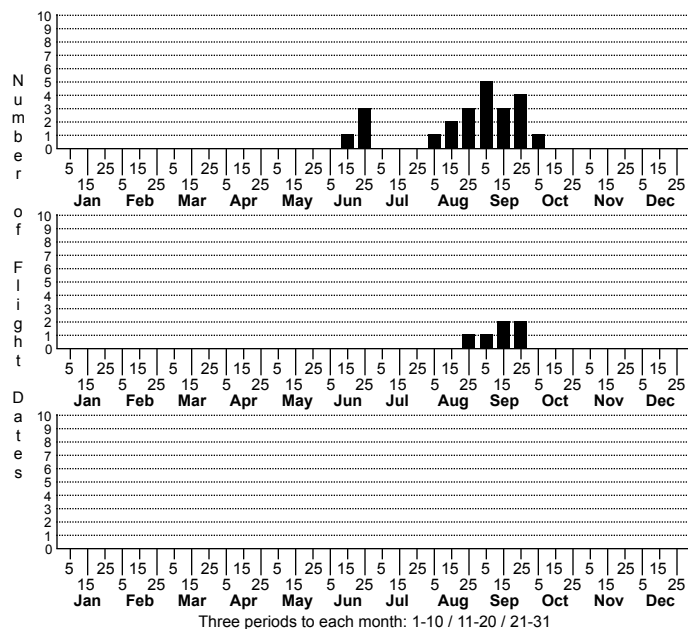


Photo (vetted) in 2024: Buncombe

High counts of:
7 - Macon - 1931-09-23
6 - Swain - 1931-09-24
4 - Watauga - 2024-08-18

Earliest date: Madison 2022-06-14
Latest date: Watauga 2023-10-01

Status	Rank
NC	US
SR	-
S1S2	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Mountain province only; probably occurring throughout the mountains, as there are several county records for northern GA. There was a large gap between the northern and southern clusters of mountain records until Pete Dixon photographed several nymphs and later an adult in Madison County in 2022. A new county record for Graham County in 2019 gives hope that the species is currently present elsewhere in the southern parts of the mountains.

ABUNDANCE: Rare and somewhat local; known from just ten of the mountain counties. Dunkle (2000) calls the species as "fairly common" over its range, though clearly in NC it is nowhere this numerous, as there are just 10-11 recent records, all but two from the same area in Watauga County.

FLIGHT: In NC this is a late-flying clubtail; nearly all records with dates are from early August to late September. Note -- the three records for June, all from Transylvania County, are for exuviae -- the shed "skins" of nymphs -- not adults. One such a nymph from Madison County, found in March, emerged as a teneral dragonfly in June, as well.

HABITAT: Cool, swiftly flowing creeks and smaller rivers, in forested areas.

BEHAVIOR: Males perch on low sites, such as twigs, leaves, and at times on the ground. They make short patrols over riffles of the creeks.

COMMENTS: This is one of many clubtails that is essentially restricted to the mountains in NC, and therefore is known to very few people. Fortunately, the species (especially a male) is easy to identify by the bold pale rings around abdominal segments and the fairly wide club. Adults are considered to be a bit wary, and thus the species is probably not as scarce in NC as the few records imply. Teddy Wilcox provided our first recent record(s), observing and photographing one individual on five dates in late summer and fall 2016 along the Boone Greenway. He rightly wondered if a single Zebra Clubtail was responsible for each of these sightings, spread out over a span of dates ranging from 31 August to 20 September. No matter the answer, he has provided the first known photos of this species in the state. A year later, John Petranka and Sally Gewalt found a few individuals in the same general area of Watauga County. Owen McConnell photographed one that came to a moth sheet at his cabin in Graham County in 2019, a very rare and fortuitous record!

The previous State Rank of S2? was a bit too liberal, despite the new Graham County record. Though there are only two sites with recent records, it is likely not well surveyed, as the flight in very late summer takes places after most of the odonate field work in the mountains. And with scattered records from ten counties, though most are old, the N.C. Natural Heritage Program has moved the State Rank to S1S2 in late 2020.