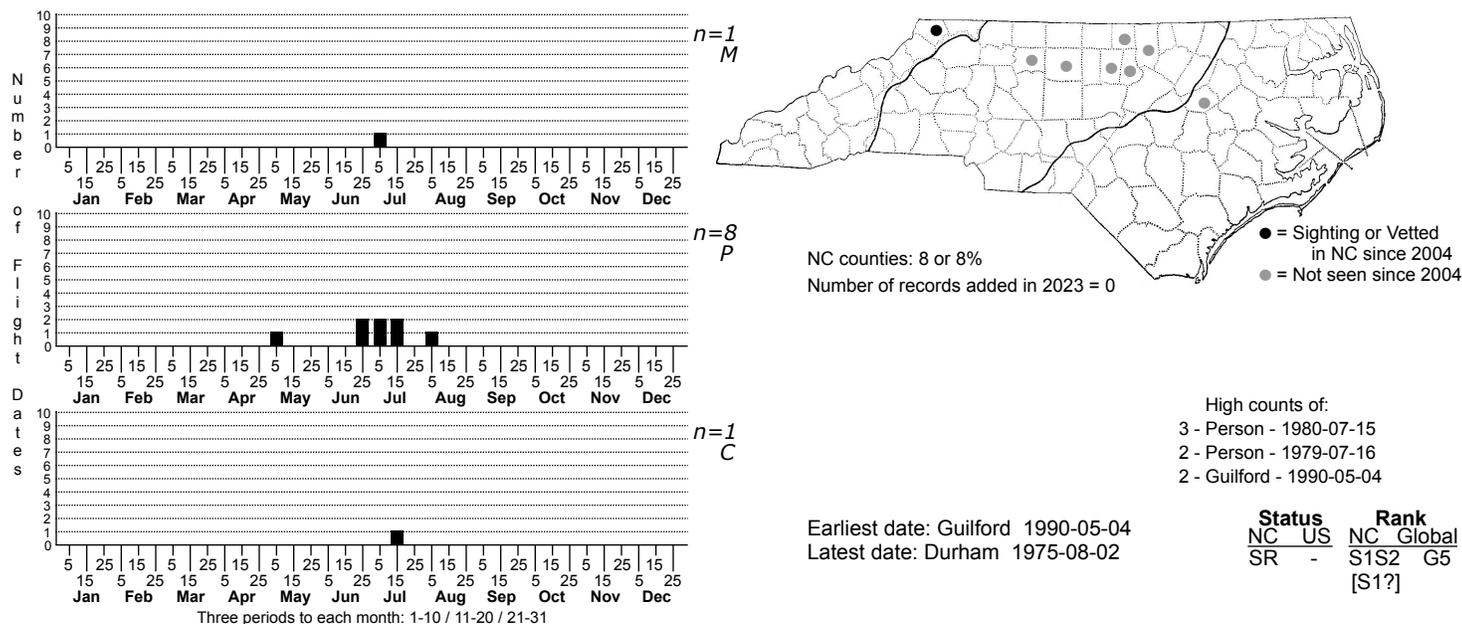


## *Lestes forcipatus* Sweetflag Spreadwing



**DISTRIBUTION:** This is a northern species whose range extends south only to NC, TN, and northern GA. In the state, it is limited to the northern third of the state, thus far recorded only in the northern mountains and northern Piedmont, with an odd disjunct record for Wilson County.

**ABUNDANCE:** Rare or overlooked. Very rare or rare in the Piedmont and extreme northern 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. Sadly, there have been no photographs of the species known for the state, and the last observation came in 2004 -- clearly indicating a decline in the state.

**FLIGHT:** Probably June into September; this is the spread of dates for GA. The Piedmont flight in NC is from early May to early August. The single record (a sight report) for the mountains is for 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:** Though there are seven old county records for the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, we have no recent records for these provinces, despite a moderate number of biologists. Maybe the similarity to other spreadwings is the main reason for this lack of recent records.

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. The State Rank is suggested now to be moved up to S1? from S1S2, and it will have to go to SH in a few years without any records in this upcoming period.