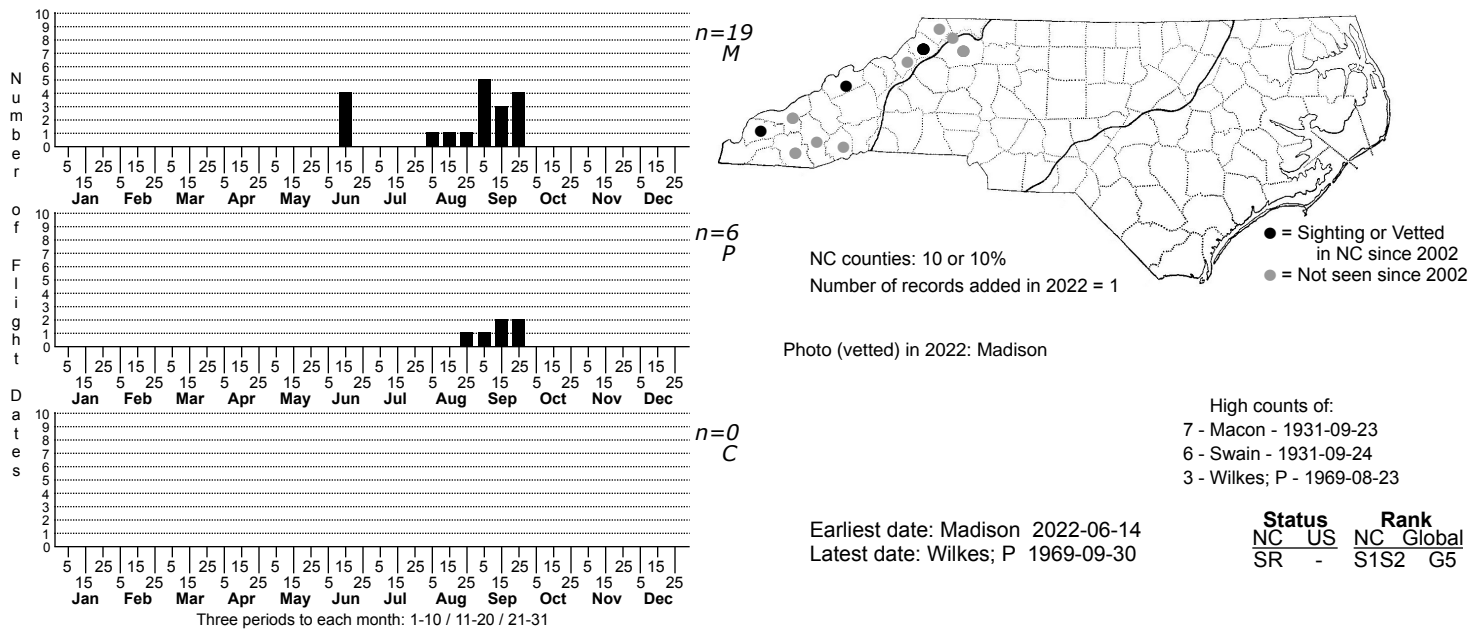


Stylurus scudderii Zebra Clubtail



DISTRIBUTION: Mountain province only; probably occurring throughout the mountains, as there are several county records for northern GA. Though there is a large gap between the two clusters of mountain records, and Buncombe and Madison counties have been fairly well worked for odonates, it is highly unlikely that this species is absent there or any rarer there than near the VA and GA borders. This is a Northern species, and NC lies near the southern edge of the range. 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: Very rare or rare; known from just nine 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 8-9 recent records, all but one from the same area in Watauga County.

FLIGHT: In NC this is a late-flying clubtail; 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.

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 place after most of the odonate field work in the mountains. And with scattered records from nine counties, though most are old, the N.C. Natural Heritage Program has moved the State Rank to S1S2 in late 2020. However, without any additional sites being reported in the next few years, this rank sadly should move to S1 or S1?.