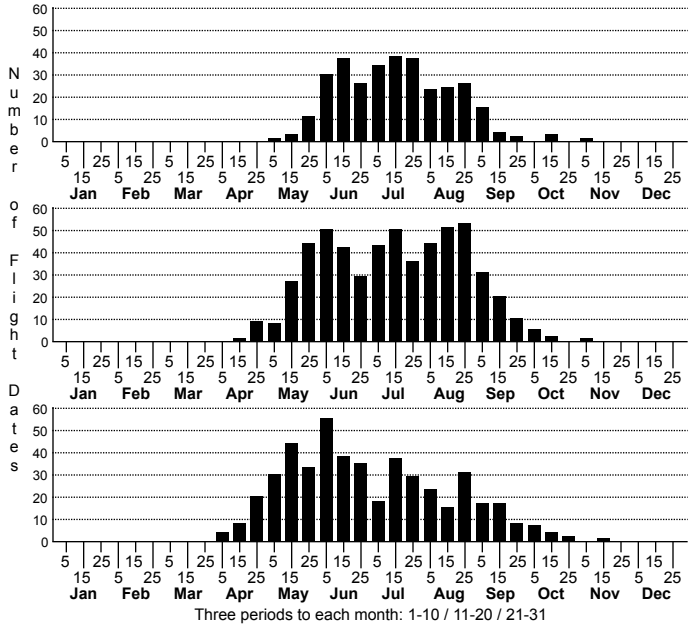
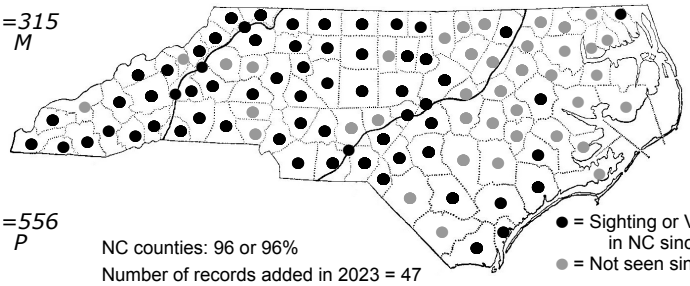
Argia fumipennis Variable Dancer





● = Sighting or Vetted in NC since 2004
● = Not seen since 2004

NC counties: 96 or 96%
Number of records added in 2023 = 47

Sight (not vetted) in 2023: Richmond; P

High counts of:
175 - Richmond; C - 2022-05-13
120 - Buncombe - 2022-06-04
110 - Richmond; C - 2023-07-22

Earliest date: Scotland 2018-04-05
Latest date: Richmond; C 1988-11-15

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S5	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Essentially statewide, with the exception being the northeastern Coastal Plain, where it may be legitimately absent from several counties. Two subspecies are represented in North Carolina: Argia fumipennis fumipennis in the Coastal Plain and far eastern Piedmont, and A. f. violacea in the mountains and most of the Piedmont.

ABUNDANCE: Common to locally abundant across the state (except rare to absent in the extreme northeast); can often be the most numerous damselfly at a site. Most numerous in the Sandhills, where two of our three largest one-day totals have been made.

FLIGHT: The flight occurs nearly throughout the odonate flight season, as the Coastal Plain records fall from early April to mid-November. The Piedmont flight occurs between late April and early November, while the mountain flight starts slightly later -- early May to early November.

HABITAT: Extremely widespread in habitats. Around small streams, ditches, pond margins, and other slow waters; usually where there are grasses and sedges. May often feed well away from water.

BEHAVIOR: Arguably the most conspicuous of the dancers, the males are easily seen perched on rocks or other vegetation in or close to a stream. They can be found on dirt tracks or roads away from water.

COMMENTS: As the name implies, this species has highly variable color patterns, though there is generally some lavender coloration on the thorax. It is another of our more familiar damselflies in the state, being common to very common in each of the three provinces and recorded from every county except for four in the northeastern corner of the state. There are two subspecies in the state -- the dark-winged nominate one (Argia fumipennis fumipennis) is found over most of the Coastal Plain, whereas the clear-winged one (A. fumipennis violacea) occurs over the remainder of the state.