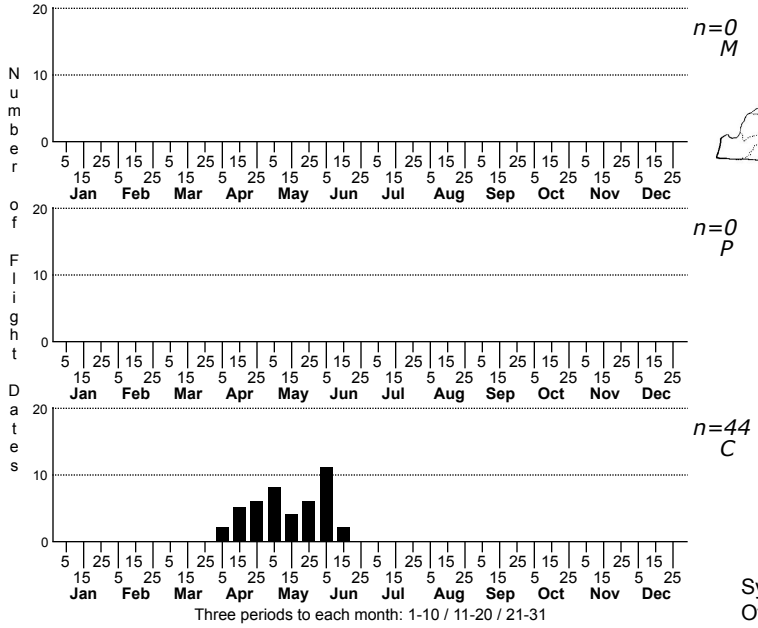
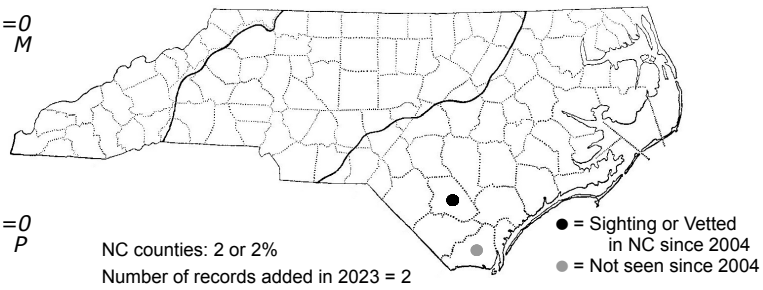
Phanogomphus cavillaris Sandhill Clubtail





High counts of:
55 - Bladen - 2021-05-24
18 - Bladen - 1966-05-08
17 - Bladen - 2019-05-06

Earliest date: Bladen 2024-04-07
Latest date: Bladen 2022-06-13

Status NC	Status US	Rank NC	Rank Global
SR	-	S1	G4

Synonym: *Gomphus cavillaris*
Other Name: Brimley's Clubtail - Phanogomphus cavillaris brimleyi

DISTRIBUTION: Extreme southeastern corner of the state (Bladen and Brunswick counties only); disjunct from the main part of the range in FL and extreme southern GA. Surprisingly, not yet known from SC.

ABUNDANCE: Very rare and local in NC, but numerous at one or more sites in Bladen County; a remarkable count of 55 was made by Matt Spangler (via kayak) around the shoreline of one bay lake in 2021. Dunkle (2000) calls it "common" in FL, but the fact that the species hasn't been found in SC or most of GA suggests that it must be quite scarce (or absent) away from natural lakes or natural limesink ponds.

FLIGHT: Spring to very early summer. NC dates fall between mid-April and mid-June.

HABITAT: Sand-bottomed lakes and ponds only; so far only at or near natural Carolina bay lakes and limesink ponds. Individuals are often seen along the shoreline of a natural lake, perching on the sand or on twigs/logs in the water. One seen in May 2015, however, was over a mile from the nearest lake and perched on the ground along a roadside.

BEHAVIOR: Males perch on the ground or in vegetation near natural lakes and ponds.

COMMENTS: The subspecies in NC is Phanogomphus cavillaris brimleyi. This subspecies is also found in the panhandle of Florida; the nominate subspecies (P. c. cavillaris) is found throughout the FL peninsula. Ed Corey saw and photographed several individuals on 3-4 June 2008 at bay lakes in Bladen County, to confirm that the species still has a presence in NC. Over 35 additional records were made between 2009 and 2021, at various bay lakes in this county, and thus it is not restricted to just one or two sites. Note, however, that all of the non-Bladen records (i.e., Brunswick County) are from 1992 and earlier; thus, currently it is just known from a single county. In that county, the individuals noted by Cuyler were presumably using the many limesink ponds for their habitat. There has been much survey in recent years at the numerous limesink ponds at Boiling Spring Lakes, and though a number of other rare or uncommon odonate species have been found at them, none have been Sandhill Clubtails.