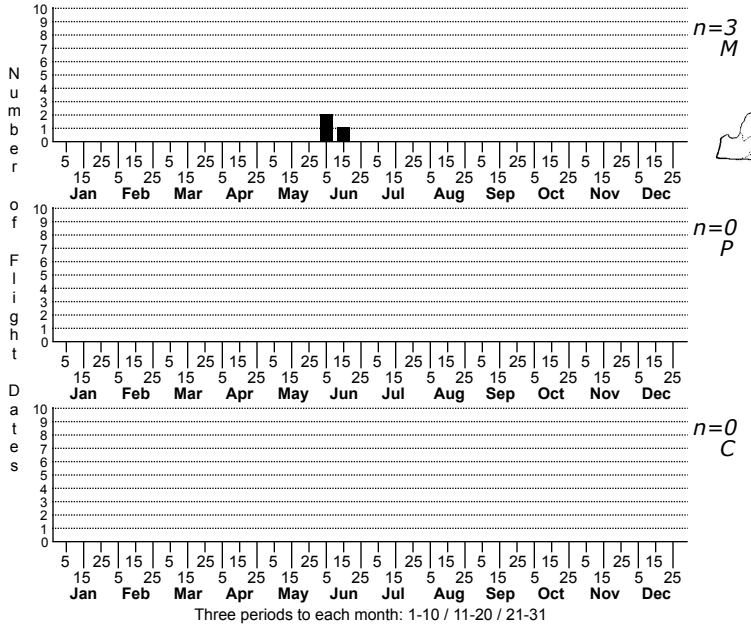
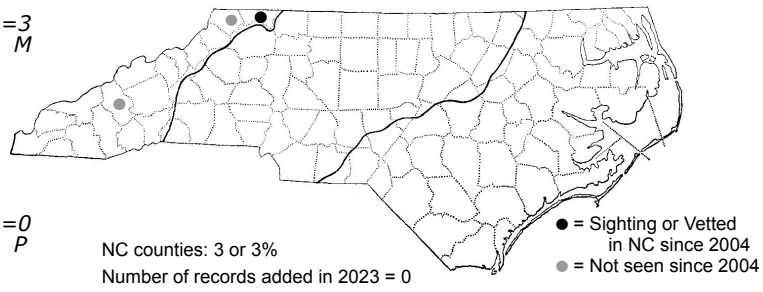
Ophiogomphus aspersus Brook Snaketail





NC counties: 3 or 3%
Number of records added in 2023 = 0

High counts of:
1 - Alleghany - 2007-06-13
1 - Haywood - 1958-06-09
1 - Ashe - 1994-06-05

Earliest date: Ashe 1994-06-05
Latest date: Alleghany 2007-06-13

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
SR	-	S1	G4

DISTRIBUTION: This is a Northern species, apparently with a disjunct population in the southern Appalachians. In NC, it is found primarily in the northern mountains (next to the VA state line), with an outlier record from Haywood County.

ABUNDANCE: Very rare (only one recent record) in the vicinity of the New River in Ashe and Alleghany counties, and certainly very rare to absent farther southward in the mountains. This is especially true in that all known daily counts are of just a single individual. This is clearly one of the state's rarest dragonflies for which there is a definite recent record; there are a handful of other dragonflies that are just as rare (or rarer) for which there are no certain records in the past 20 years and thus might actually have been extirpated from the state.

FLIGHT: Probably the latter part of May into most of June. The only NC dates available are for a very narrow period of 5-13 June, though of course the flight period must surely be a month or more.

HABITAT: Not surprisingly, it breeds in clear, rocky rivers or streams, but Dunkle (2000) says these waters are "in the open", with brushy margins.

BEHAVIOR: Adults forage both near water and in fields and woodland roads/trails. Males perch on rocks in the rivers/creeks and elsewhere.

COMMENTS: This is another of the many clubtails that is very poorly known in the state, in part because the southern edge of the range apparently includes only a relatively few counties (in the mountains). Ted Wilcox's record came from the New River, as did a collection record from Duncan Cuyler. (Thus, the habitat as written in most guides is not strictly "brooks" or "streams", but it can be larger rivers such as the New.) Biologists looking for clubtails in the mountains always should check first alongside the largest and rockiest rivers available -- in the case of Ashe and Alleghany counties, it is the New River. Sadly, quite a few biologists have searched this river in the past decade, coming up short on this and a few other rare clubtails (such as Pygmy Snaketail). Nonetheless, there are several major forks of this river, and dozens of miles of likely suitable habitat; there are still opportunities to discover these rare snaketails!