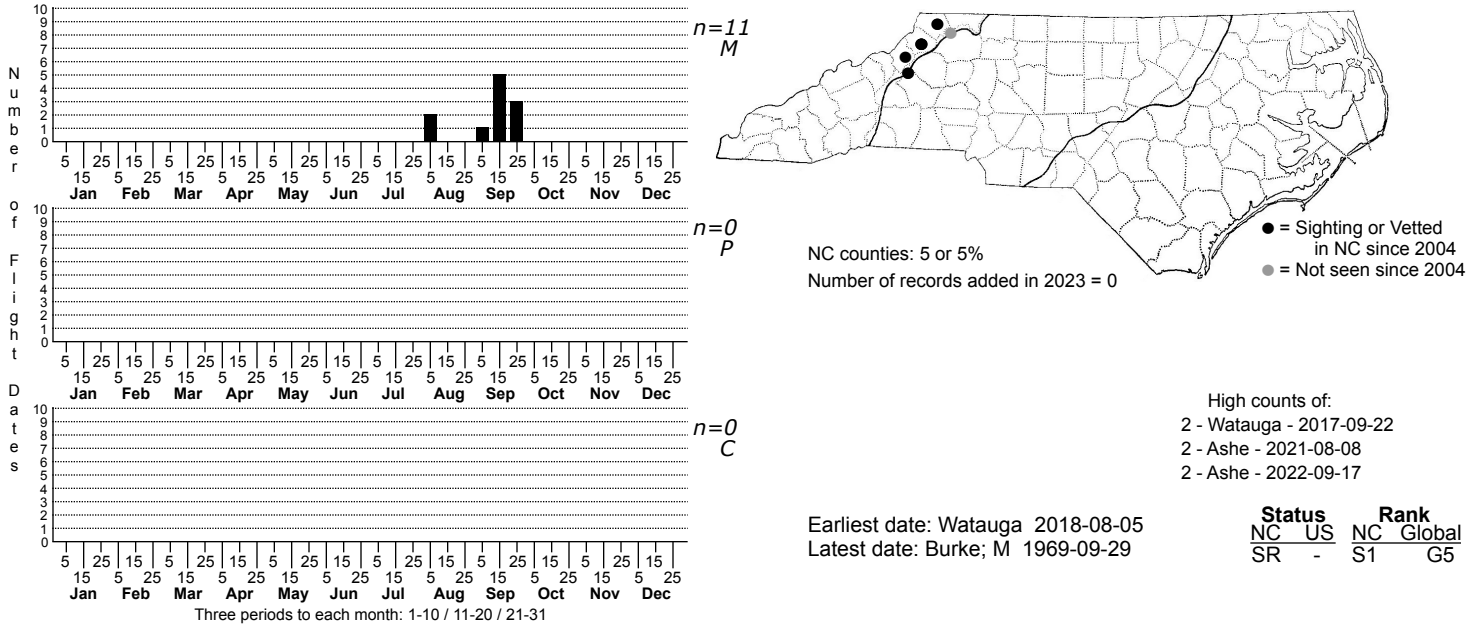
Aeshna tuberculifera Black-tipped Darner



DISTRIBUTION: Northern mountains/foothills only; records only from Ashe, Watauga, Avery, Wilkes, and Burke counties. Ashe County was newly added to the list in 2021.

ABUNDANCE: Rare, and possibly local. Poorly known in the state, though there are now a handful of recent records (2016-2022); the last previous record was from 1969.

FLIGHT: Late-flying for a dragonfly, especially in the mountains. The NC dates available occur between 5 August and 29 September, though most are from the last 20 days of September. Likely flies from early August into October, but most odonate field work in the mountains terminates in September and thus few people are likely to be active in the northern mountains when this species is flying.

HABITAT: Mostly at ponds with marshy edges, such as cattails. The ponds are typically at high elevations (mainly over 3500 feet).

BEHAVIOR: Poorly known in NC. All recent records were of individuals seen over or along the edges of ponds, and thus it is not known how far individuals range away from such waters in the state.

COMMENTS: NC lies at the southern edge of the range, as it is not known from Georgia. Jim Petranka photographed an individual -- the first photograph of the species known in NC -- on 27 September 2016. This excellent record has moved the species off of the "historical" list of the N.C. Natural Heritage Program; thus, the State Rank has changed from SH [historical] to S1 [very rare]. Both John and Jim Petranka added additional county records (for Watauga and Burke), documented with photos, in 2017. Mark Shields photographed two individuals at two small high-elevation ponds in northwestern Ashe County in 2021, at a "predictable" locale. Obviously, other ponds in the northern mountains need to be checked in the late summer and fall seasons, especially in August and September.