

## *Helocordulia selysii* Selys's Sundragon

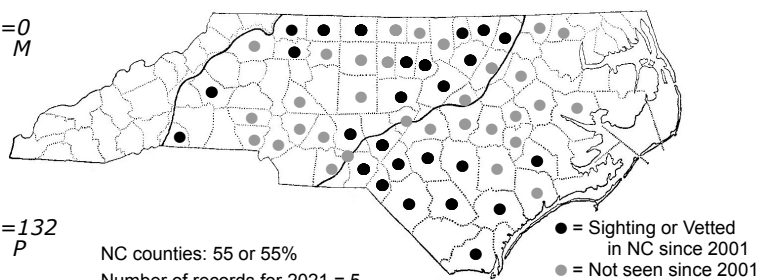
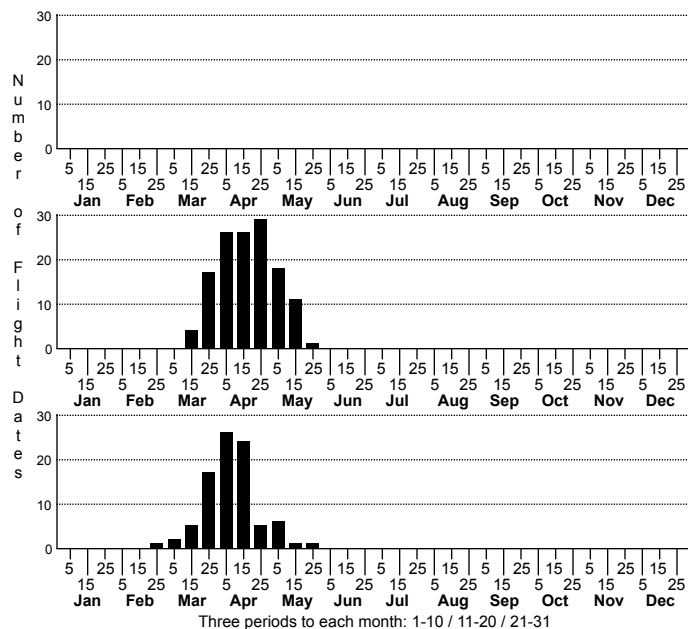


Photo (vetted) in 2021: Polk; P

High counts of:  
29 - Sampson - 2017-03-25  
29 - Bladen - 2017-03-25  
13 - Cumberland - 2020-03-19

Earliest date: Scotland 2020-02-23  
Latest date: Cumberland 1987-05-28

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S4	G4

**DISTRIBUTION:** Nearly throughout the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain, though apparently absent from the eastern part of the latter region (no records east of Hertford and Beaufort counties). Of sporadic occurrence in the western Piedmont, possibly absent from a few of these counties. No mountain records.

**ABUNDANCE:** Uncommon to occasionally or locally fairly common in the eastern half of the Piedmont and the southern Coastal Plain. Slightly less numerous (uncommon) in the central and northwestern Coastal Plain; rare to uncommon in the western Piedmont.

**FLIGHT:** First two-thirds of the spring season only; mid-March to late May, though scarce after early May.

**HABITAT:** Small creeks and trickles, where sandy, and typically in shaded or semi-shaded places.

**BEHAVIOR:** Its behavior is similar to that of baskettails, with males patrolling small areas along creeks. However, as with baskettails, adults frequently move well away from water, feeding along dirt roads and wide, sunny trails, perching like those species in an oblique manner on twigs close to the ground. They can be somewhat unwary and studied/photographed at close range.

**COMMENTS:** As Dunkle (2000) calls the species "uncommon" over its range, and Beaton (2007) calls it "Uncommon to rare" in its GA range, the species must be more numerous in NC than in most other states in its range. Active field biologists will often find one or two each spring, though it seldom occurs in numbers. At first glance the two sundragons (genus *Helocordulia*) resemble baskettails (genus *Epitheca*), but their spindle-shaped abdomen (narrowed at the anterior end) and ochre-orange band/ring on abdominal segment 3 separates the two genera.