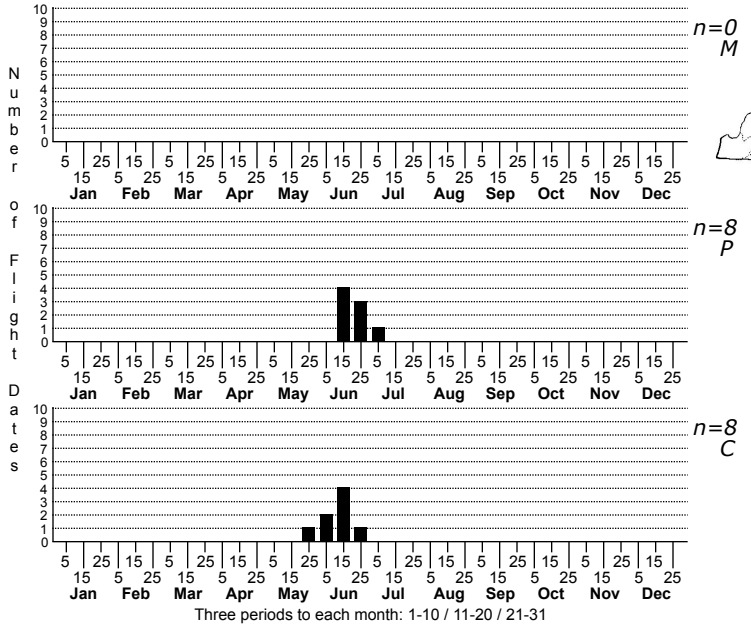
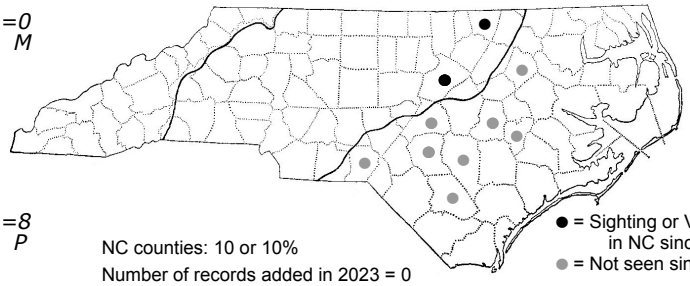
Neurocordulia molesta Smoky Shadowdragon





High counts of:
4 - Cumberland - 1968-06-18
2 - Wake - 2010-06-22
2 - Wake - 2010-06-17

Earliest date: Wayne 1970-05-21
Latest date: Warren 2016-07-06

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
W	-	S3?	G4
		[S2?]	

DISTRIBUTION: Scattered in the western half of the Coastal Plain, north to Edgecombe County; range barely extends into the adjacent Piedmont (Wake and Warren counties). Range extends eastward only to Edgecombe, Lenoir, and Bladen counties; but it also occurs in the Sandhills region. Though the bulk of the range lies west of the state in the Mississippi drainage, the species appears to be practically absent from the mountains and Piedmont of NC.

ABUNDANCE: Secretive and difficult to survey (as are all shadowdragons) because of their crepuscular habits, but seemingly less numerous than two shadowdragons (Alabama and Umber) within its NC range. Probably rare to locally uncommon.

FLIGHT: Probably May into July. The NC dates available fall between 21 May and 6 July. A number of records were made in Wake County in the last 20 days of June 2010.

HABITAT: Occurs at larger bodies of water than does Alabama Shadowdragon -- rivers and larger creeks.

BEHAVIOR: As with all shadowdragons, Smoky Shadowdragons remain motionless, hanging from twigs and leaves in the forest shade during the day, and fly over water for only the last hour of daylight, with most activity right at dusk.

COMMENTS: The slightly smoky color of the wings, along with olive-green eyes, separates this species from the other shadowdragons. As with the other shadowdragons in NC, one must make a concerted effort in the last hour of daylight to see this species, and a net would be essential for identification in the poor light conditions when they are flying. On the other hand, Paul Scharf serendipitously found one on his lighted moth sheet in Warren County in 2016; his photos are uploaded on the OdonataCentral website as well as this website.

Though the species might not be truly rare in NC, there are records for just 10 counties and only a very few new records, and thus the N.C. Natural Heritage Program has placed the species on its Watch List, in 2012. (One of the previous county records has been determined by our website editors to not be a Smoky Shadowdragon.) As there are so few recent records, the State Rank should be re-adjusted upward to S2?, and some consideration for placing the species on the Significantly Rare list must be given. However, sadly, it was retained at an S3? State Rank at the end of 2022.