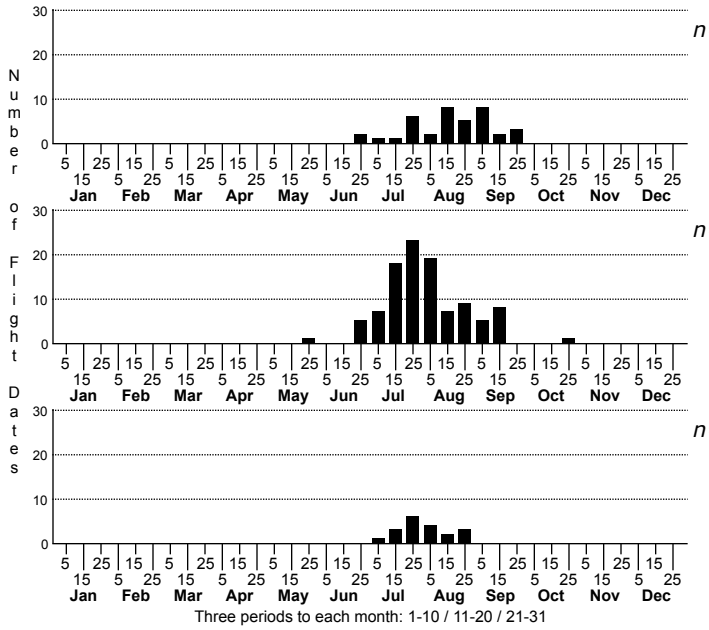
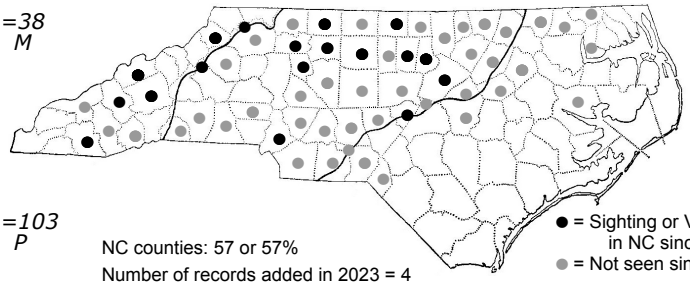
Somatochlora tenebrosa Clamp-tipped Emerald





● = Sighting or Vetted in NC since 2004
● = Not seen since 2004

NC counties: 57 or 57%
Number of records added in 2023 = 4

Sight (not vetted) in 2023: Wilkes; M
Photo (vetted) in 2023: Burke; M

High counts of:
20 - Stokes - 2021-08-24
8 - Richmond; C - 1991-08-10
6 - Madison - 2019-07-31

Earliest date: Durham 2011-05-28
Latest date: Davidson 1985-10-25

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S4	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Present over most of the mountains, throughout the Piedmont, and in the northern Coastal Plain. Seemingly absent from the southern Coastal Plain counties, except in the Sandhills region; no records east of Gates, Beaufort, Harnett, and Scotland counties. Probably occurs in all mountain counties, but recorded so far only in roughly half of the counties in that province.

ABUNDANCE: Generally uncommon but widespread in the Piedmont, somewhat less numerous than the Mocha Emerald. Rare (to formerly uncommon) in the northern Coastal Plain and the Sandhills, as well as in the mountains. Alarmingly, we have no recent records at all from the Coastal Plain; has it declined there in recent decades? However, there are very few recent observers and reports of any odonate species from much of this large area (northwestern half of the Coastal Plain), and thus trends are not certain.

FLIGHT: Primarily the summer season, to early fall; generally from late June or early July to mid-September.

HABITAT: As with other emeralds, it breeds in small forested wetlands, such as small streams and seeps.

BEHAVIOR: Males may be seen flying patrols over the small streams, more easily noticed when the streams are becoming dry. Adults typically forage away from water along wooded roads, edges, and small clearings. They perch on twigs in the shade, often higher than does the Mocha Emerald.

COMMENTS: The male cerci are indeed "clamp-like" when seen from the side, rendering identification somewhat easy when seen well. Also, this species has stripes on the sides of the thorax, whereas Mocha is nearly devoid of such markings. Clamp-tipped and Mocha are the only emeralds normally seen in the Piedmont; even so, because emeralds perch in the shade, often not in conspicuous places, many persons have trouble becoming familiar with this group of dragonflies (even though members of the genus are collectively numerous in much of NC).