

Brachymesia gravida Four-spotted Pennant

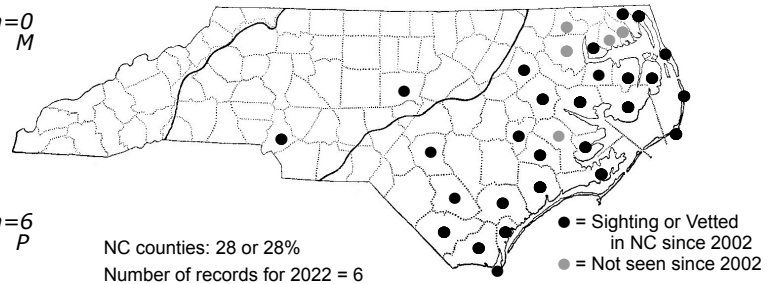
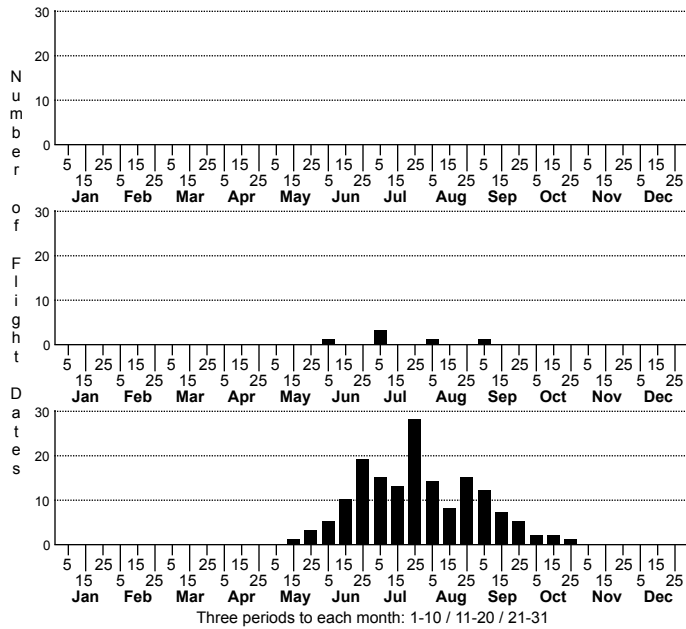


Photo (vetted) in 2021: Chatham

High counts of:
1000 - New Hanover - 2014-05-24
67 - Onslow - 2015-08-29
60 - Onslow - 2017-07-14

Earliest date: New Hanover 2008-05-18
Latest date: Brunswick 2020-10-22

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S5	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Mainly the lower half of the Coastal Plain, inland (as a probable breeder) to Hertford, Edgecombe, Cumberland, and Columbus counties. A presumed storm-based stray to the central Piedmont (Mecklenburg County), where several were seen and documented with photos on multiple dates in 2018. Another photographed in Chatham County in July 2021 (and another or the same individual there in September) also came immediately after passage of a tropical storm. This is one of just roughly five "primarily coastal" dragonflies in NC (along with Seaside Dragonlet, Needham's Skimmer, Roseate Skimmer, and Marl Pennant). A photograph of one (and with five seen) in Cumberland County in 2013 extended the range inward by 15-20 miles in the southern part of the Coastal Plain.

ABUNDANCE: Common close to tidal/brackish waters; much less common -- rare to uncommon -- in areas well away (several dozen miles) from tidal waters. Accidental or casual stray into the southern and eastern Piedmont, after tropical storms.

FLIGHT: A wide flight period during the warmer months, ranging from mid-May to mid-October.

HABITAT: This is one of the few dragonflies in the East that favors brackish water for breeding; habitats include brackish lakes, ponds, and ditches, but also still fresh water habitats also. The handful of 2018 records from Mecklenburg County are from small ponds.

BEHAVIOR: Adults are often seen in some numbers flying along ponds and ditches, frequently perching on twigs and vegetation in easy view of the observer.

COMMENTS: The white stigmas are very conspicuous and identify these dragonflies, even if the single large dark patch near the node on each wing isn't seen at first glance. Adults often obelisk. Thus, its behavior, unique markings, and occurrence in open habitats render it easy to identify and one of the favorites among odonate watchers. The photo record from Mecklenburg County in early June 2018 is likely attributable to the passage of Tropical Storm Alberto a few days earlier. To follow up on that record, other biologists there recorded the species on three later dates, including an excellent four seen on July 8 and another five on August 4; surprisingly these records came from several locations in the county! As of now, these Mecklenburg records likely do not represent a range extension, especially as none were reported from the county in 2019 or 2020. The two records for Chatham County in 2021 also should not be assumed to represent a range extension either.