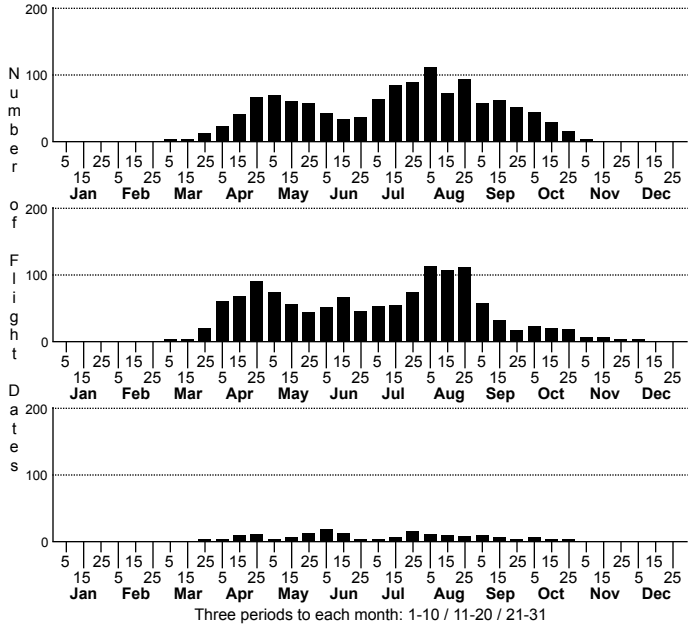
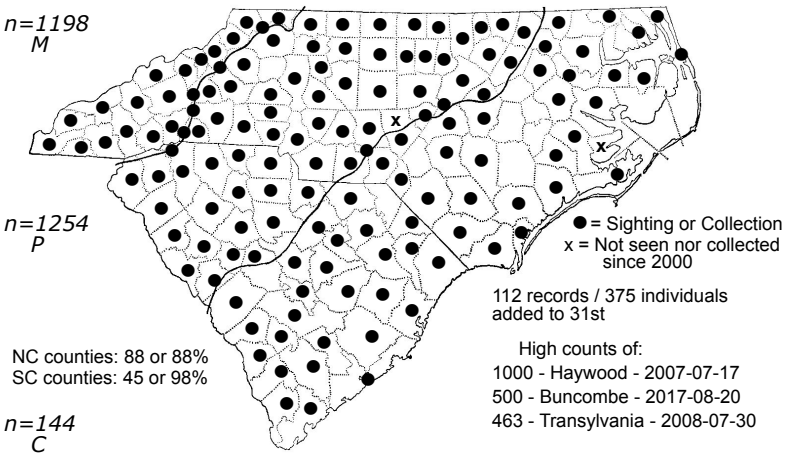
Pipevine Swallowtail *Battus philenor*





112 records / 375 individuals added to 31st

High counts of:
1000 - Haywood - 2007-07-17
500 - Buncombe - 2017-08-20
463 - Transylvania - 2008-07-30

NC counties: 88 or 88%
SC counties: 45 or 98%

Earliest date: Orange 3 Mar 2023
Latest date: Wake 6 Dec 2015

Status and Rank

State	Global
S5	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Nearly statewide; more numerous in the Mountains than in the other provinces. Only a few records from north of Albemarle Sound and from the eastern "Pamlimarle" Peninsula, and just one record for the Outer Banks. Likely does occur in all 100 counties.

ABUNDANCE: Fairly common to locally abundant in the Mountains; mainly uncommon in the Piedmont and upper Coastal Plain; rare in most of the Coastal Plain, becoming very rare toward to coast, especially so on the Outer Banks.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Late March to early November; sparingly from mid-March into early December. Probably three broods, but some references suggest that there are just two broods in our area. As with nearly all swallowtails, broods overlap in time such that there are no gaps in the flight period.

HABITAT: Typically along woodland borders, powerline clearings, roads, or wide trails through hardwoods or mixed woods. Usually seen not too far from deciduous woods, but it may occasionally be seen in weedy fields and brushy areas. Not often seen in the shade of forests, though the foodplants are forest interior species. At times seen in gardens and urban areas, and in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain it may be more often seen in such sites (gardens and arboretums) than in more remote areas.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: Native food plants are restricted apparently to Pipevine (Isotrema macrophyllum) and Virginia Snakeroot (Endodeca serpentaria), but the species also uses exotic species of pipevines planted in gardens. Adults use a wide variety of flowers for nectaring; when nectaring they flutter their wings constantly, seldom remaining still for a good photograph.

COMMENTS: The infrequency of the species in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain is not unexpected, as Virginia Snakeroot, its only known native food plant in these provinces, is infrequent as well. These swallowtails are encountered most frequently along dirt roads through rich montane woods where many are killed by speeding vehicles. It is found in the Piedmont in powerline clearings and woodland borders, in mesic situations. It has a quick, "choppy" flight like that of Black and Zebra swallowtails rather than the slower and deeper wingbeats of Eastern Tiger and Spicebush swallowtails.