Dythemis velox Swift Setwing

n=11
M

n=259
P

n=8
C

Three periods to each month: 1-10 / 11-20 / 21-31

NC counties: 50 or 50%

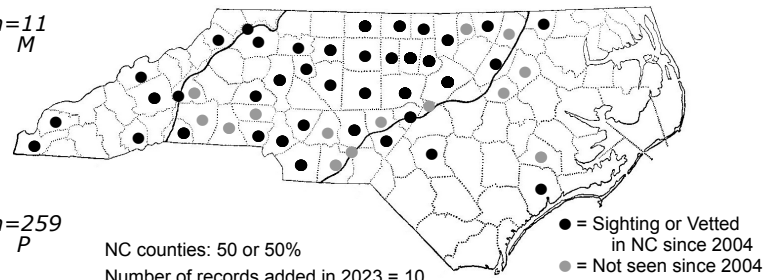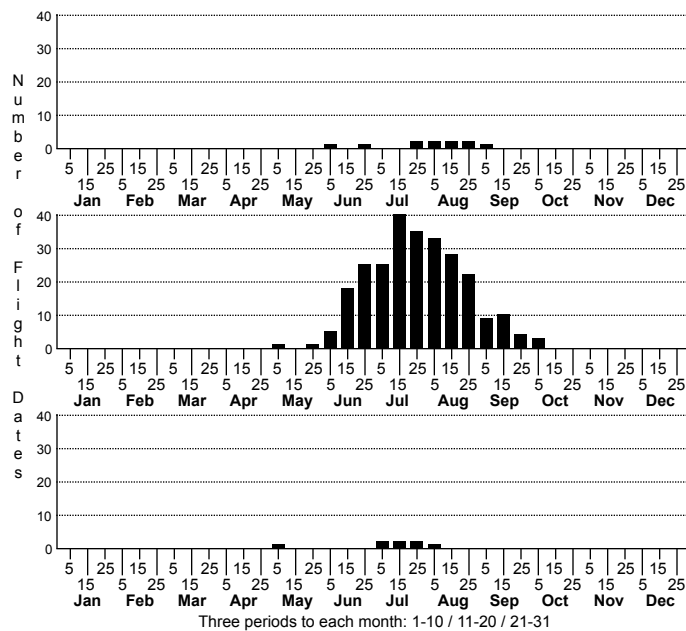Number of records added in 2023 = 10

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

Sight (not vetted) in 2024: Wilkes; M
Sight (iNat) in 2024: Transylvania
Photo (vetted) in 2024: Cumberland
Incomplete date not graphed:
P=n+1

High counts of:
60 - Orange - 2002-08-06
25 - Durham - 2013-06-20
16 - Chatham - 2021-08-01

Earliest date: Durham 2003-05-04
Latest date: Iredell 2008-10-05

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S4S5	G5

DISTRIBUTION: Primarily the Piedmont, but also widely scattered in the mountains (mostly at low elevations) and in the western Coastal Plain; quite disjunct records for Jones and Onslow counties in the lower Coastal Plain. Present in the western portion of the Sandhills region.

ABUNDANCE: Fairly common (and apparently increasing) in the Piedmont, except scarce to locally absent in parts of the northwestern portion of the province. Very rare in the central and southern (low) mountains and Coastal Plain portion of the range. The species has slowly been expanding its range northeastward in recent decades.

FLIGHT: Much of the warmer months, from early May to early October; however, most records fall between mid-June and mid-September. There are not enough data to define the flight periods in the mountains or Coastal Plain, as the above refers to the Piedmont province flight data.

HABITAT: Ponds and small lakes, but might breed also at slow rivers or wide creeks. These waters are typically in open or partly open situations.

BEHAVIOR: Males are almost always seen close to the margin of a pond or lake, perching usually several to many feet above water on twigs of small trees along the margin. Females may forage farther from water but are much less often seen.

COMMENTS: This is our only Dythemis (setwing), and thus it looks and acts like no other dragonfly in NC. The narrow black abdomen has a conspicuous white dorsal spot on segment 7. Most notable is that adults typically perch in a "sprinter's stance", with abdomen raised, seemingly ready to bolt at any moment. Sometimes they perch with wings drooped and held forward, as do Blue Dashers, but they can just as often perch with wings held above horizontal, angled over their thorax. They are somewhat wary and people typically need binoculars (or a net) to see them well. A recent (2017) photographic record for Onslow County may suggest that the species is expanding its range into the eastern Coastal Plain.