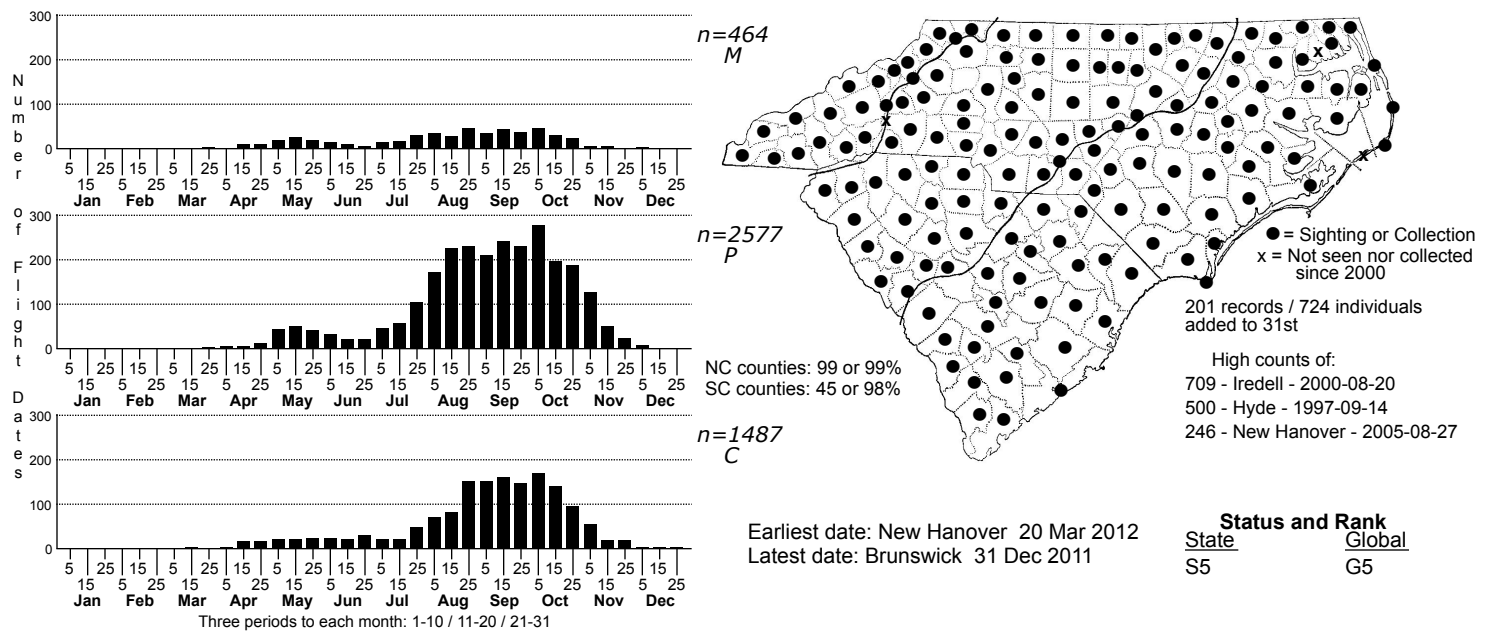


## Clouded Skipper *Lerema accius*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Statewide, occurring in all provinces on numerous occasions, and doubtless present in all counties.

**ABUNDANCE:** In late summer and fall, it is very common to locally abundant in the southeastern corner of the state; common to at times very common elsewhere in the Coastal Plain and the eastern half of the Piedmont; and fairly common to locally common in the western Piedmont and Mountains. It is generally uncommon, at best, in any province prior to late July or early August. This appears to be one of the few skippers in the state showing a definite increase in numbers in recent years; this species and the Fiery Skipper are notably more common now than 10-20 years ago in most regions.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** The primary flight period, seemingly of one long brood, is early July to early November, rarely well into December. The first brood in NC is comparatively small; this flight period is from mid-April through June. Though often considered as partly migratory, the Clouded Skipper in NC may be more of a "winter-stressed" species instead.

**HABITAT:** This is a widespread butterfly of partly forested to semi-open grassy places, such as savannas, forest borders, and powerline clearings. It also occurs in open Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*)/scrub oak woods. It also reaches some gardens and arboretums, as well. It is especially common in any grassy places near the coast, particularly near the margins of maritime forests and bottomland/swamp forests. Some references mention "woods edges and clearings near swamps and rivers" (Opler and Malikul 1992) and "prefers moist grassy areas" (Glassberg 1993). It does favor moist areas over dry, sandy places, but it really is not to be considered one of the "wetland" skippers (a la many Coastal Plain species in the genera *Euphyes*, *Amblyscirtes*, and *Poanes*).

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The foodplants are a wide array of grasses. The species nectars on a great array of flowering plants. Unlike most skippers, it often nectars on tubular (campanulate) flowers such as false foxgloves (*Agalinis* spp.) and morning-glories (*Ipomoea* spp.).

**COMMENTS:** This is the most common dark brown to blackish skipper in the late summer and fall seasons in NC, though it may at times be outnumbered by the Ocola Skipper. Counts of 50 or more can be made close to the southeastern coast in September or October, when it is one of the latest skippers on the wing. It also is one of the earliest flying butterflies, especially skippers, in the morning, often perching on leaves with wings partly opened, while dew is still on the vegetation.