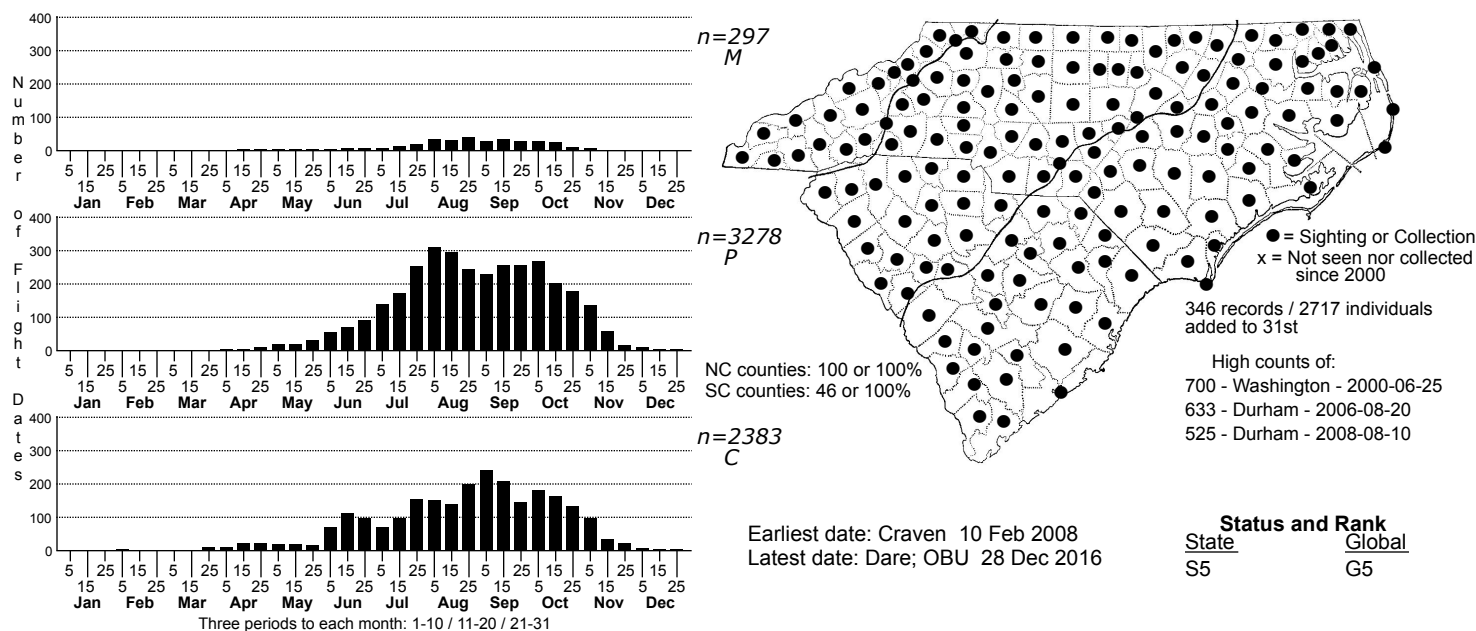


## Fiery Skipper *Hylephila phyleus*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Statewide, found in all counties, but scarce in the northern Mountains (despite records from all such counties).

**ABUNDANCE:** Increasing in the past several years. Very common to abundant in the Coastal Plain and in the eastern and southern Piedmont; generally common to very common in the central Piedmont. Fairly common in the western Piedmont and in the southern/central Mountains, but rare to uncommon in the northern Mountains.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Probably three broods. A small brood from April to early July, and likely two overlapping ones from early July to mid-November, rarely mid-December. The species does not become common until mid-June in NC. Some of the populations in NC might be migrants from farther south.

**HABITAT:** This species likes sunny, hot places. It is widespread in weedy fields, pastures, meadows, open pine/scrub oak sandhills, roadsides, powerline clearings, savannas, and many other open country places. It is also one of the more common butterflies in gardens, lawns, and vacant lots.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The foodplants are grass species, mostly weedy ones such as Bermuda Grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) and crabgrass (*Digitaria* spp.). The species nectars on a great variety of flowers, mostly low-growing species such as clovers (*Trifolium* spp.), but also on blazing-stars (*Liatis* spp.) and many others. It often teems on Lantana (*Lantana strigocamara*) flowers in gardens and yards later in summer and fall.

**COMMENTS:** The Fiery Skipper is the most often encountered orange skipper in much of the state, especially in late summer and fall in the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont. It is often the most commonly seen butterfly in gardens, particularly in the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont. Hundreds can occasionally be seen nectaring on vervains (*Verbena* spp.) north of Pettigrew State Park in June. Too often, beginners -- especially yard butterflies -- submit photos of skippers in their gardens to experts for identification; most of the photos turn out to be "just a Fiery Skipper".