Palatka Skipper *Euphyes pilatka*

NC counties: 15 or 15%
SC counties: 6 or 13%

n=101
C

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

● = Sighting or Collection
x = Not seen nor collected since 2000

10 records / 37 individuals added to 31st

High counts of:
70 - Dare; Mainland - 1998-09-20
68 - Hyde - 1998-05-31
50 - Hyde - 2021-06-19
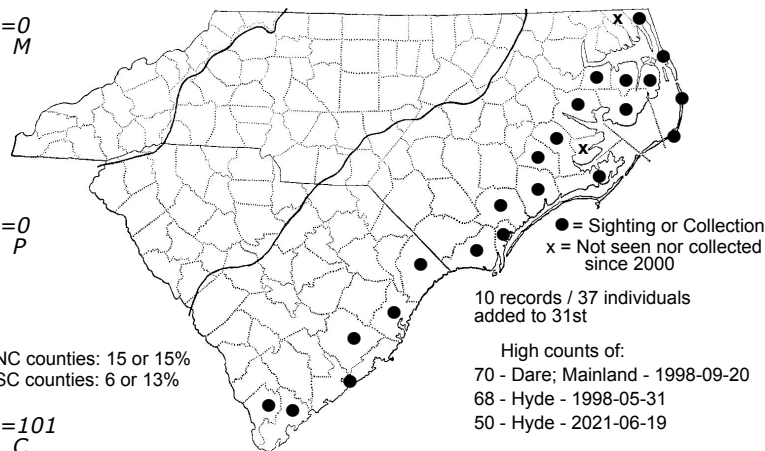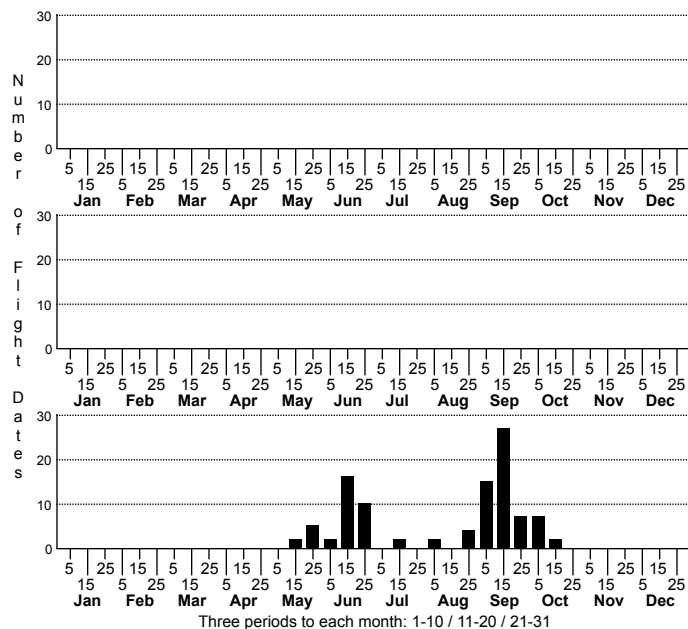
Earliest date: New Hanover 15 May 2004
Latest date: Dare; Mainland 16 Oct 2016

Status and Rank

State	Global
S3S4	G3 [G3G4]

DISTRIBUTION: The tidewater region of the lower Coastal Plain only; recorded from 15 counties, ranging from Currituck on the north to Brunswick on the south. It ranges "inland" to Beaufort County.

ABUNDANCE: Local; may be locally common to abundant, at least from Craven and Pamlico counties northward, but uncommon and local southward.

FLIGHT PERIOD: Two broods; mid- or late May to mid-July, and late August to mid-October. Unlike with most other skippers, whose second brood is usually much longer or has many more individuals flying than in the first brood, two of the three highest counts are from the first brood.

HABITAT: The species is closely tied to Sawgrass (Cladium jamaicense). Thus, it is found almost exclusively at tall, slightly brackish marshes in the tidewater area. This butterfly's abundance is tied to the abundance of Sawgrass; very common where the grass is abundant, such as parts of mainland Hyde and Dare counties along Pamlico Sound. Because nectar plants are often scarce in or near Sawgrass marshes, the species can range a mile or more away from such marshes; for example, they have been seen in powerline savannas, along canal banks (such as north of Lake Phelps), and even at a school yard with plantings of Lantana (Lantana strigocamara) and at a rest area with Lantana.

FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS: The only known foodplant is Sawgrass. The adults nectar on many flowers, such as milkweeds (Asclepias spp.); I have seen much nectaring on thistles (Cirsium spp.) and Pickerelweed (Pontederia cordata).

COMMENTS: This is a large skipper of the Sawgrass marshes. It is somewhat similar in pattern below to an Aaron's Skipper, but that species has a more obvious ray on the hind wing and is smaller in size. Actually, the Palatka looks very much below like a giant Tawny-edged Skipper! Though Sawgrass marshes have relatively few plant species with suitable nectar flowers for butterflies, I have had little problem finding Palatkas on suitable nectar sources.