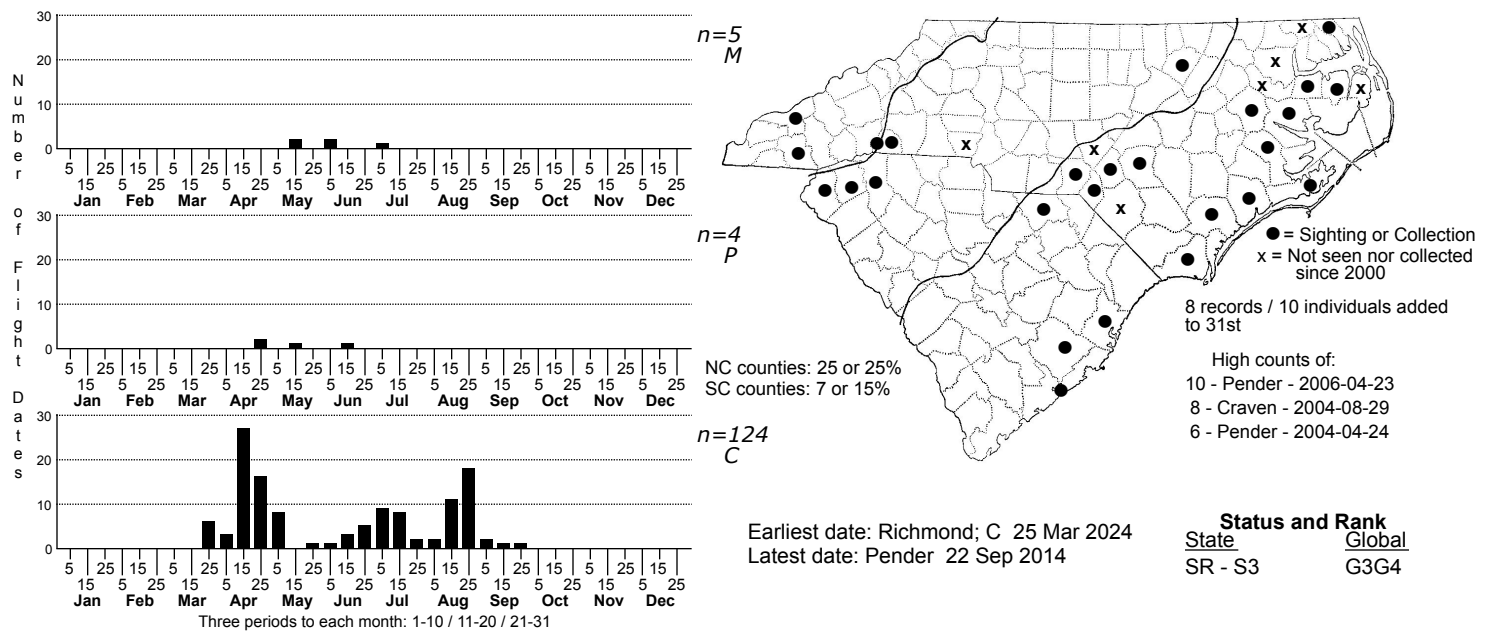


## Reversed Roadside-Skipper *Amblyscirtes reversa*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Scattered over the Coastal Plain, with records for Gaston and Polk counties along the southern Piedmont and a record for Franklin County in the eastern Piedmont. Remarkably, a few small populations were found in 2004 in the Mountains in Swain County, and a photographic record documented Macon County in 2015. Records are clustered mainly in the Sandhills and the southeastern coastal counties. At long last, a 2014 record from Camden County filled in the "ugly" gap between Albemarle Sound and the VA state line; the species has long been known from southeastern VA.

**ABUNDANCE:** Very uncommon in the Sandhills and the southern half of the coast; rare and local elsewhere in the Coastal Plain. Extremely rare in the southern and eastern Piedmont and in the southern Mountains. It appears to be somewhat more numerous than the Carolina Roadside-Skipper in the Sandhills, but it is rarer than that species over much of the remainder of the Coastal Plain. However, it clearly outnumbers the Carolina in savannas/flatwoods in the extreme southeastern corner of the state in Pender and Brunswick counties.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Three broods in the Coastal Plain; early April to mid-May, mid-June to late July, and early August to early September. No idea how many broods are present at the tiny populations in the Piedmont and Mountains; the few records there fall between late April and early July, but presumably there are only two broods in these provinces.

**HABITAT:** This is another wetland species, again with a preference for areas near cane (*Arundinaria* spp.). However, there is some difference in habitats between this species and the similar Carolina Roadside-Skipper. The Reversed has a tendency to occur in Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) or Pond Pine (*P. serotina*) wetlands, such as savannas, flatwoods, and margins of pocosins. These habitats also tend to be more open and "sunnier" than habitats for the Carolina. We have few if any records from swamps or bottomlands away from pine-dominated habitats.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The foodplant is cane -- mainly Switch Cane (*A. tecta*). I have always seen the species near cane stands, even perching on the leaves. It nectars on a variety of flowers, though it is often first seen on the ground or on leaves.

**COMMENTS:** This species was considered just a "color variety" of the Carolina Roadside-Skipper by Klots (1951), but the Reversed has since been split as a separate species. The ranges of the two are quite similar, and the Reversed is even less well known over its range than the Carolina. Even so, it is probably better known, and more numerous, in NC than in any other state (though a recent one-day count of 65 was made in Francis Marion National Forest in SC). Both may occasionally be seen together, as in Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty) and Croatan National Forest. However, the Reversed favors somewhat more open sites, near or under Longleaf Pine or Pond Pine, than does the Carolina, which likes wetlands adjacent to hardwood forests or mixed forests.

The year 2004 was a "good" one for the species. Shay Garriock discovered the first colonies of the species in the NC Mountains, in Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Swain County). In addition, two of our highest counts ever came in 2004, in Croatan National Forest and in Holly Shelter Game Land. However, a Carolina Butterfly Society field trip to Holly Shelter Game Land in 2006 finally recorded a double-digit one-day count, tallying 10 individuals on April 23. Jason Love photographed one in his yard near Otto in Macon County in June 2015 to provide just the second record for the Mountains; he photographed another in Swain County in early July 2020, our first montane record after early June.