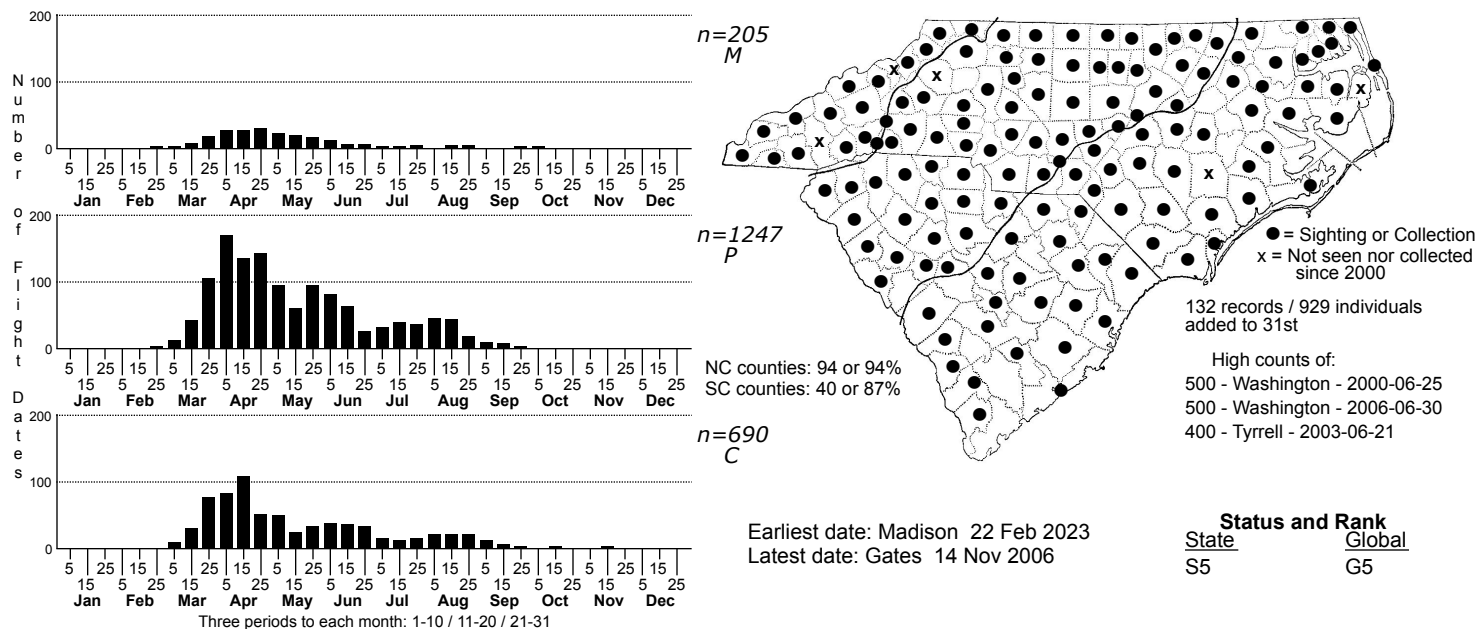


# Zebra Swallowtail *Eurytides marcellus*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Essentially statewide, but only a few records for the northern Mountains and the extreme northwestern Piedmont. Might be a migrant or vagrant to some Mountain counties, as foodplants may be lacking at mid- and higher elevations.

**ABUNDANCE:** Somewhat local in occurrence; may be quite common in a few places where the foodplant -- pawpaw -- is abundant, such as near and in Pettigrew State Park and in the Great Dismal Swamp. Generally uncommon to locally fairly common in the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont, but rare to locally uncommon in the western half of the Piedmont. In the Mountains, generally limited to areas below 2500 feet; even in these lower elevations, it is rare to uncommon.

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Early March to mid-September, and sparingly in the Coastal Plain into November; scarce after late August, and very rare before mid-March. Apparently three broods, at least downstate; the first brood is from mid-March to mid-May, the second brood from mid-May to early July, and a small brood from mid-July into September. Does not appear in the Mountains until late March, and the flight periods are very poorly known there. The first brood is the largest in most areas (even though the state's highest counts are from the second brood).

**HABITAT:** The species is most common where Common Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) grows -- bottomlands of brownwater rivers, moist nonriverine swamps, and rich slopes. Various other moist hardwood forests provide habitat for the species. As with nearly all butterflies, it may be seen along woodland borders and other open places, and it may at times be seen in pine forests well away from pawpaw.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** Foodplants are strictly the two pawpaws in NC -- Common Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) and Dwarf Pawpaw (*A. parviflora*); the latter is probably used only infrequently. I have not noted an affinity for any particular nectar plants, but as with all swallowtails, the species is often found nectaring. Zebra Swallowtails swarm on Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) when it blooms in June along canals in open fields north of Pettigrew State Park.

**COMMENTS:** This is one of the most striking and most easily identified of our butterflies. Usually only one or two are encountered at a time, but at a few rich forests such as Pettigrew State Park, Great Dismal Swamp, and Camassia Slopes, in the Coastal Plain, ten or more individuals can be seen per hour. Nonetheless, the species has a more restricted distribution in the Coastal Plain than most other swallowtails because pawpaws are found mainly in brownwater floodplains or nonriverine hardwood forests over mineral soils.