

Orthemis ferruginea Roseate Skimmer

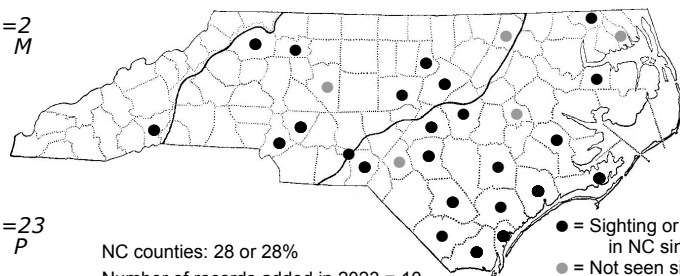
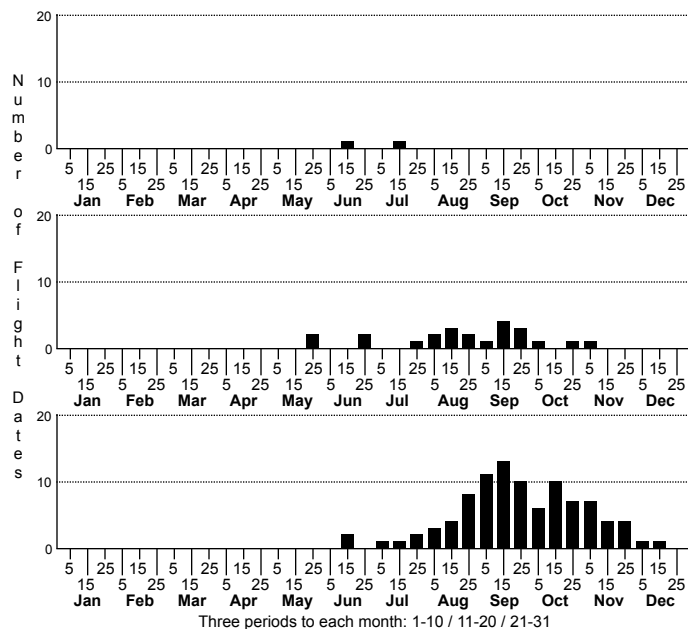


Photo (vetted) in 2024: Chatham

Incomplete date not graphed:
C=n+1

High counts of:
9 - Onslow - 2017-10-05
7 - Onslow - 2017-11-03
7 - Brunswick - 2021-10-20

Earliest date: Cabarrus 2022-05-27
Latest date: New Hanover 2017-12-19

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S3S4	G5

DISTRIBUTION: A northbound stray or migrant in most areas of the state, but almost certainly now a resident in the southeastern counties, north to Carteret County, and also apparently a breeding resident at a pond in Cabarrus County in the Piedmont (in 2021-2022). Widely scattered over the Coastal Plain and now the Piedmont, and with two recent sightings from Henderson County in the mountains. Greatly expanding its range northward; thus, the county map will likely become out-of-date very quickly. Primarily found along the southern coast, north somewhat regularly to Carteret County, but one must assume it is not a resident (yet) in most non-coastal counties, based on its very spotty range inland and numerous "one-time-only" records.

ABUNDANCE: Increasing in recent years; probably rare 10 or 20 years ago. Now, it is generally uncommon in coastal counties northward to Carteret County, but it can be locally fairly common at a few sites north into Onslow County. Very rare visitor or stray farther inland and northward. Our peak single-day count is just nine individuals, though this number should be surpassed in the next few years.

FLIGHT: Late May to late November, with one mid-December record; mostly from late August to mid-November. These dates suggest a fall migrant species, moving north after breeding farther to our south. However, there are a few sites along and near the coast -- and now at a single known site in the central Piedmont -- where it is a resident.

HABITAT: Generally at ponds, marshes, and lakes. Despite it being seen mainly near the coast, most breeding waters are probably fresh, though it does use brackish waters.

BEHAVIOR: Males are very conspicuous as they perch on twigs at their pools or ponds; they are quite active and do much chasing and patrolling. Adults will often feed well away from pools, as do most other skimmers.

COMMENTS: The deep rose-pink color of the male's abdomen is not often seen in the animal kingdom, even in birds or butterflies, and is more reminiscent of the rosy color of the petals of many wildflowers! This species is currently undergoing a rapid northward expansion in the range and in numbers. It is not hard to find at various places around Wilmington, such as near gardens and other suburban places. But questions remain, especially regarding residency status in NC away from the southern coast. It was dropped as a Watch List species by the N.C. Natural Heritage Program in fall 2010. A review of iNaturalist photos in late 2022, plus other records submitted to this website, added several new county records, all in the Coastal Plain.