

## *Lestes australis* Southern Spreadwing

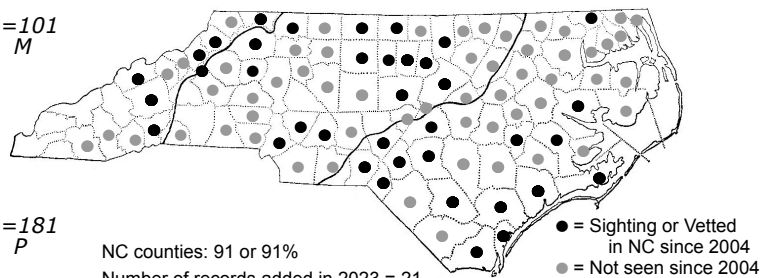
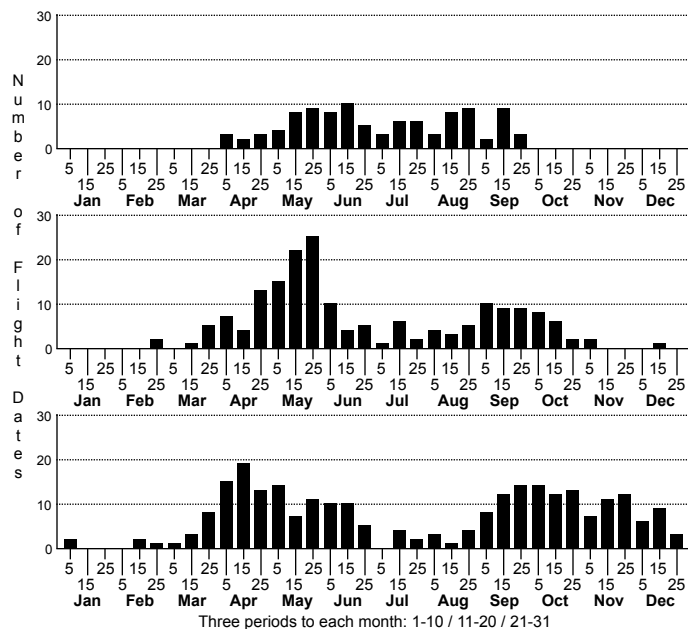


Photo (vetted) in 2024: Alexander

Incomplete date not graphed:  
C=n+1

Earliest date: Onslow 2017-01-03  
Latest date: Onslow 2019-12-26

High counts of:  
35 - New Hanover - 2021-12-03  
31 - New Hanover - 2016-12-18  
28 - New Hanover - 2021-12-16

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
-	-	S5	G5

Other Name: Common Spreadwing, Northern Spreadwing

**DISTRIBUTION:** Essentially statewide, even to the coast (where many odonates are rare or absent). No records yet from several counties at the southwestern tip of the state, but probably present in all 100 counties. Also lacking a record for well-worked Dare County.

**ABUNDANCE:** Fairly common statewide, except for obviously very rare to rare in the southwestern mountains. Does not occur in swarms or in otherwise large numbers, as the peak one-day count is 35 individuals. Can be locally common in some places in the southeastern Coastal Plain.

**FLIGHT:** A remarkably wide flight period, even into early winter. In the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, flies from as early as mid-February to mid-December (rarely near the coast into January). In the mountains, the flight occurs between early April and late September. Interestingly, the flight charts for all three provinces show a dip in records in the heat of summer. The species is not reported to be migratory, but is there some aestivation of individuals in summer, or is this pattern simply a result of different broods?

**HABITAT:** Generally around ponds or small lakes, with much vegetation around their margins, including marshes.

**BEHAVIOR:** This spreadwing tends to be slightly more obvious than most others in the genus, as the males may perch more readily on twigs and grass blades over water instead of deep within heavy vegetation.

**COMMENTS:** Until recently, this was considered as a subspecies of the Common Spreadwing; however, that species was split into two species -- Southern Spreadwing and Northern Spreadwing (not in North Carolina). Mark Shields has provided a number of early winter records for the species at a few coastal ponds.