

Hylogomphus abbreviatus Spine-crowned Clubtail

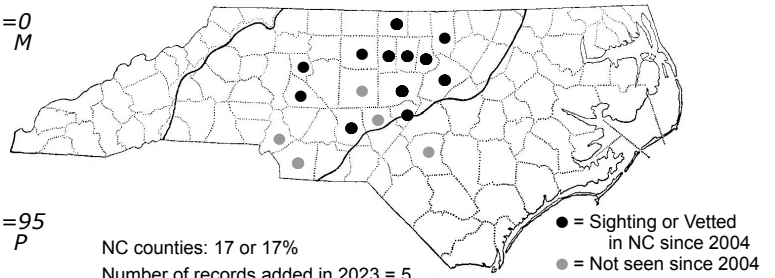
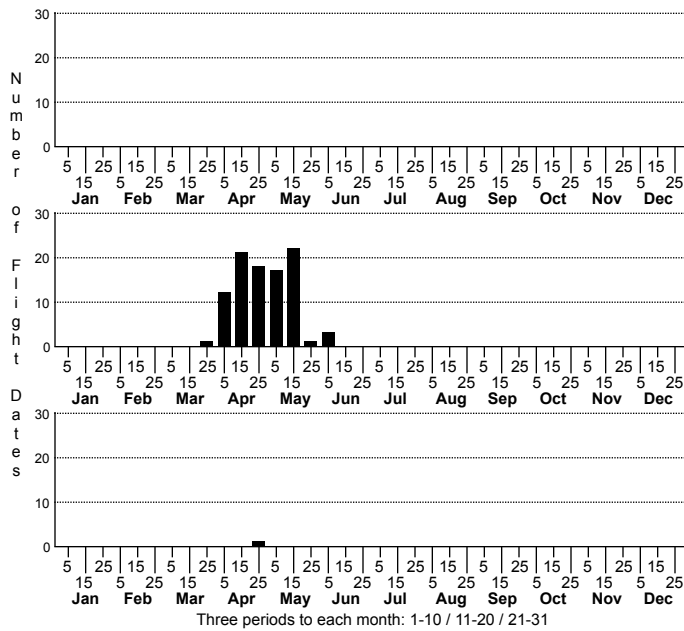


Photo (vetted) in 2024: Guilford

High counts of:
 21 - Alamance - 2023-04-21
 20 - Orange - 2017-04-02
 15 - Guilford - 2023-04-21

Earliest date: Durham 2020-03-28
 Latest date: Orange 2021-06-06

Status		Rank	
NC	US	NC	Global
W	-	S3S4	G4

Synonym: *Gomphus abbreviatus*

DISTRIBUTION: Found only in the central and eastern Piedmont and the extreme southwestern corner of the Coastal Plain (at least in the Sandhills).

ABUNDANCE: Rare to uncommon in the eastern half of the Piedmont, and very rare in the southwestern Coastal Plain. However, it is easily overlooked or confused with other species. It can be common at a very few sites, as there are three recent double-digit counts, and another of 8 individuals, in three counties. Duncan Cuyler made several dozen collections in the lower Piedmont a few decades ago; but until about 2016, however, very little was known about this species in NC. Thankfully, the past few years have seen quite a few new records, many documented by photographs. The recent spate of photographic records for the northeastern Piedmont, as opposed to the central and southern Piedmont, might be due to the preponderance of observers in that part of the province.

FLIGHT: Spring season only. The flight occurs from early April to early June, though there was a late March record in 2020. The peak was formerly during the first 20 days of May, but there are many recent April records, and our three highest counts are now in April.

HABITAT: This is another riverine clubtail species, favoring fast-flowing rivers and large streams.

BEHAVIOR: Seen mainly at or near rivers/streams, on rocks or vegetation. Dunkle (2000) states that males are most active in the late afternoon, though it certainly can be seen in the morning or early afternoon.

COMMENTS: As with most clubtails, even ones with a range in the eastern Piedmont (where the greatest number of odonate biologists live and conduct field work), this is a somewhat poorly known species, at least by observers and photographers. Most clubtails are difficult to identify unless netted or closely photographed (from several angles). This species looks quite similar to the Piedmont Clubtail, and it can also be confused with Banner Clubtail. Though its range extends from SC northward into Canada, it has a somewhat narrow east-west range, barely ranging west to OH. We have had a number of recent records, thankfully, and thus its range and abundance in NC are becoming better known. Nonetheless, the species remains on the N.C. Natural Heritage Program's Watch List.