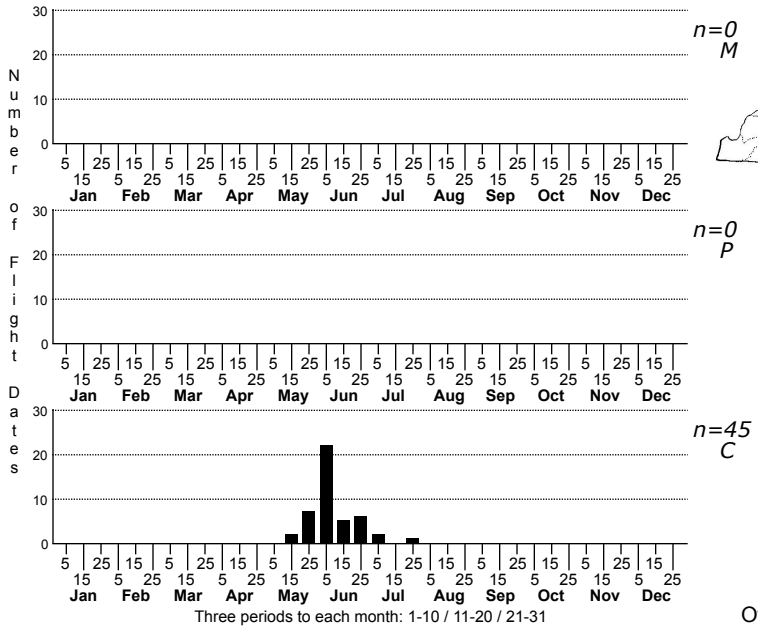
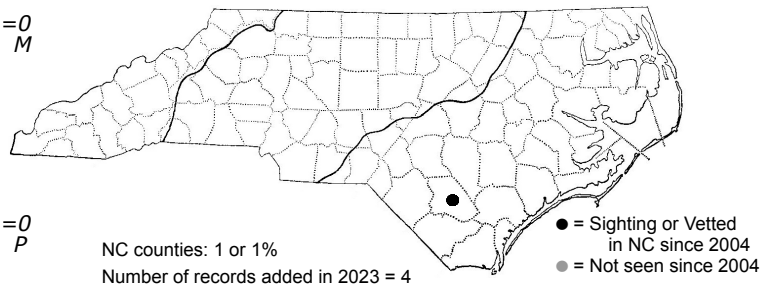
Progomphus bellei Belle's Sanddragon





NC counties: 1 or 1%
Number of records added in 2023 = 4

High counts of:
30 - Bladen - 2008-06-04
15 - Bladen - 2008-06-03
14 - Bladen - 2009-06-25

Earliest date: Bladen 2018-05-13
Latest date: Bladen 2009-07-26

Status NC	Status US	Rank NC	Rank Global
SR	-	S1	G3

Other Name: Variegated Clubtail

DISTRIBUTION: Only known in NC from large, natural Carolina bay lakes in Bladen County. Known from Baytree, Jones, Salters, Singletary, Little Singletary, and White lakes. This area is highly disjunct from the main part of the range in the FL panhandle.

ABUNDANCE: Not uncommon at several lakes during at least a portion of the flight period; however, absent to extremely rare away from such lakes.

FLIGHT: The flight occurs from mid-May to late June, rarely to late July, with the peak in early June. Dunkle (2000) gives a flight range from "Early May to mid-Aug.", though that likely applies to the FL population.

HABITAT: In NC, only at large Carolina bay lakes, with a sandy bottom and shoreline.

BEHAVIOR: Males perch on sand along the lake shorelines, but they also perch on adjacent twigs and cypress knees along the shoreline and on piers. (Sanddragons [genus Progomphus] are named by the habit of males for perching on damp sand.) Males make patrolling flights about a foot above the surface of the lakes, coming back to the shore to perch from time to time. They are quite wary, difficult for a person to approach within 10 feet.

COMMENTS: This is clearly one of the rarer dragonflies in the southeastern part of the country, with a global rank of G3. Of note is that the species is not known at all from intervening SC or GA. One must wonder if Belle's Sanddragon might occur at other similar large, sand-bottomed Carolina bay lakes in NC, such as Lake Waccamaw. Photos and specimens from NC have much smaller (or lack) yellow spots on the side of the abdominal club and probably warrant description as a new subspecies (though presumably not as a new species). Ed Corey found the species to be quite numerous on several dates in June 2008 at four of the State Lakes in Bladen County (photos and specimens for documentation). However, he and other State Park personnel were unable to find the species at Lake Waccamaw in Columbus County in 2008; repeated visits to this lake in recent years still have failed to find the species there.