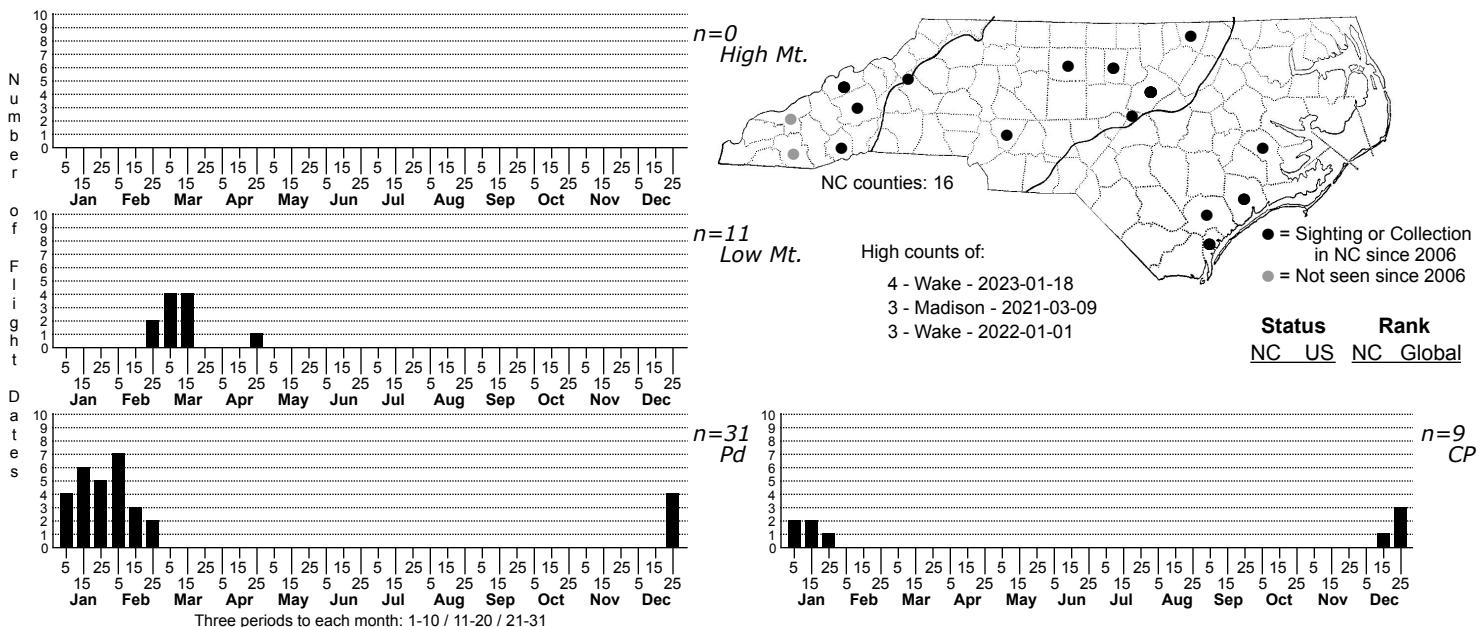


Feralia major Major Sallow



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Amphipyrinae TRIBE: Psaphidini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: An isolated genus with 7 species worldwide, 1 palearctic, the other 6 nearctic, with 3 occurring in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Poole (1995)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Maier et al. (2011); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: This spectacularly patterned moth is perfectly camouflaged for life among the moss and lichen dominated pine forests across the state. *Feralia major* is similar in pattern to *F. jocosa* and *comstocki* but typically shaded with black on the forewings. The hindwing is green along the outer margin, which is diagnostic, especially in green forms of the species that lack the black shading. *F. comstocki* can also have a green marginal band on the hindwing but compared to *F. major*, the basal forewing line is quite different. In the Coastal Plain this is the only *Feralia* and the black form dominates, we have seen one green form from New Hanover County. Although recorded from the mountains, we have not seen the specimens and do not know which form(s) are there. Sexes are identical.

DISTRIBUTION: Possibly occurs statewide, although we have no records from much of the state.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Single brooded, flying only in late winter and early spring. In the Coastal Plain this species is active in late December and early January

HABITAT: North Carolina records range from xeric, coastal sandhills dominated by Longleaf Pines, to Piedmont reservoir shorelines, where Loblolly Pine is the most common species of pine, to Cove Forests in the Mountains, where White Pine is typically the most common species of pine.

FOOD: Larvae are probably associated with hard pines, particularly Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*), Virginia Pine (*P. virginiana*), Pond Pine (*P. serotina*), and possibly Pitch Pine (*P. rigida*). Wagner et al (2011) also list Eastern White Pine (*P. strobus*) but that seems unlikely to be a major foodplant in North Carolina. We do not have any larval records in our state. If the species feeds in the upper parts of Pond Pine in the Coastal Plain, finding caterpillars would be difficult. Study is needed to determine the host plants used in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes to light but no records from bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S4]

STATE PROTECTION: Has no legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: We have few records for this species, probably due to its late winter flight period. However, it occupies a wide range in North Carolina and is associated with common host plants; it is therefore likely to be secure within the state, although more surveys of adults or larvae in order to determine its actual distribution, abundance, and habitat associations.