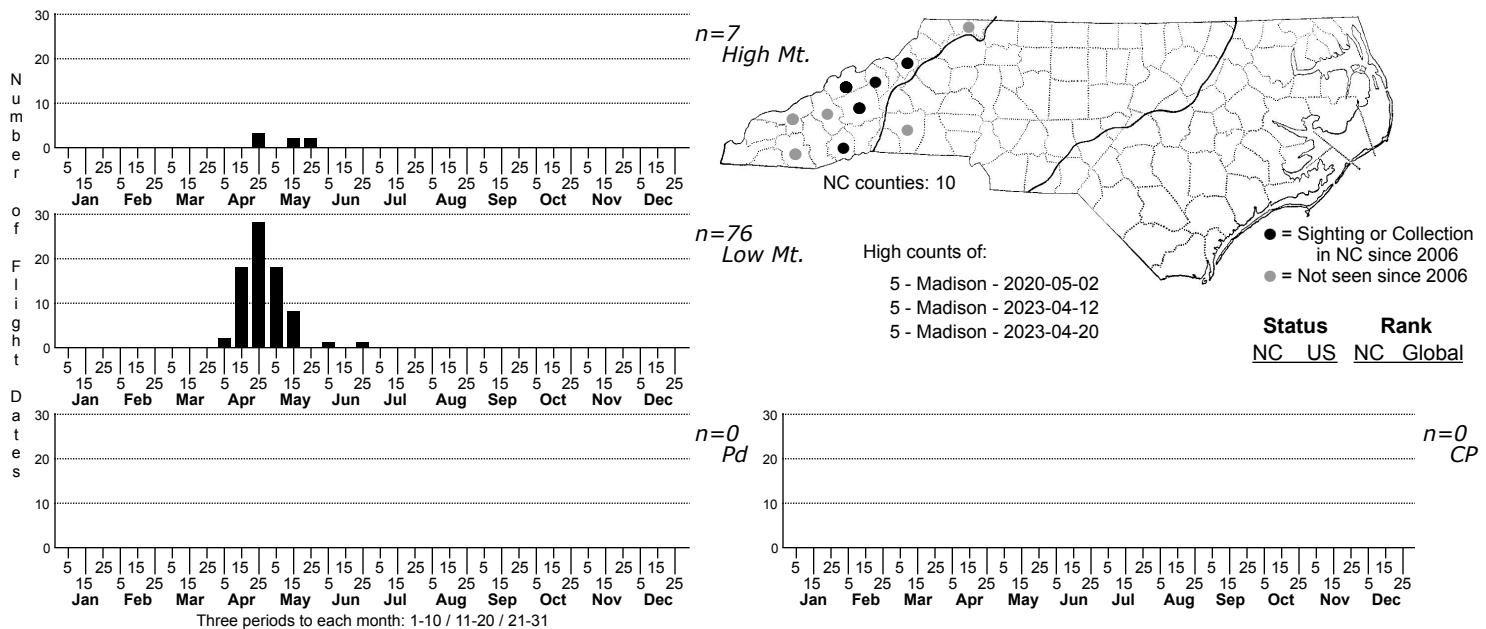


Feralia comstocki Comstock's Sallow



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: Similar to the other two species of *Feralia* but flies later, barely overlapping the others in April. *F. comstocki* is usually a brighter green than either of the other two and lacks the black form found in the other two species. Typically, it has several black patches on the forewing in addition to the patch located between the orbicular and reniform that also occurs in *jocosa* and *major* (Forbes, 1954). Sexes are identical.

DISTRIBUTION: Comstocki occurs throughout the mountains but seemingly absent from some ideal-looking habitats and then found in others where it would not be predicted.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Single brooded, flying primarily in April and May with stragglers out as late as June.

HABITAT: Mesic montane forest with abundant Hemlock, including Cove Forests at mid elevations and Northern Hardwoods at higher elevations.

FOOD: Larvae are reported to feed on a number of evergreens, including fir (*Abies*), hemlock (*Tsuga*), and spruce (*Picea*) (Forbes, 1954; Poole, 1995), but there are no specific feeding records from North Carolina.

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

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: We have relatively few records for this species, probably due in part to its late winter flight period. To the extent that this species is dependent on Hemlock or Fraser Fir, it may be highly vulnerable to the effects of the introduced Adelgids that are decimating those species. It is also likely to be vulnerable to the effects of global climate change, including the drying out of mesic forests and particularly in the retreat of Spruce-fir Forests to even smaller high elevation refugia than they currently occupy. More surveys need to be conducted of adults or larvae in order to determine its current distribution and habitat associations, as well as to monitor its population trends as its environments change.