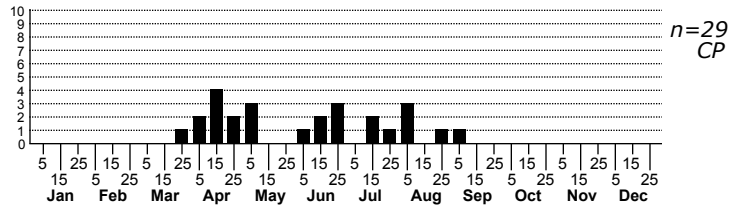
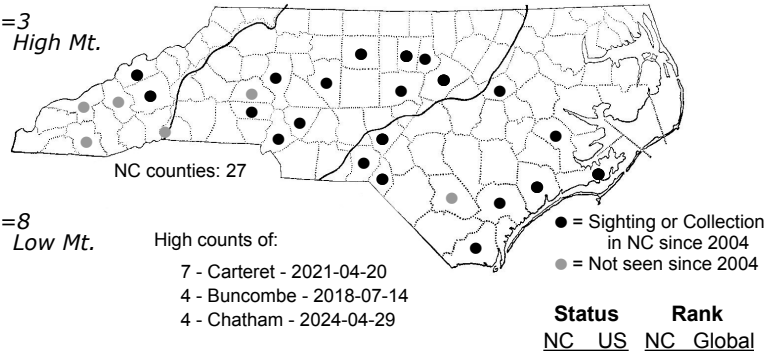
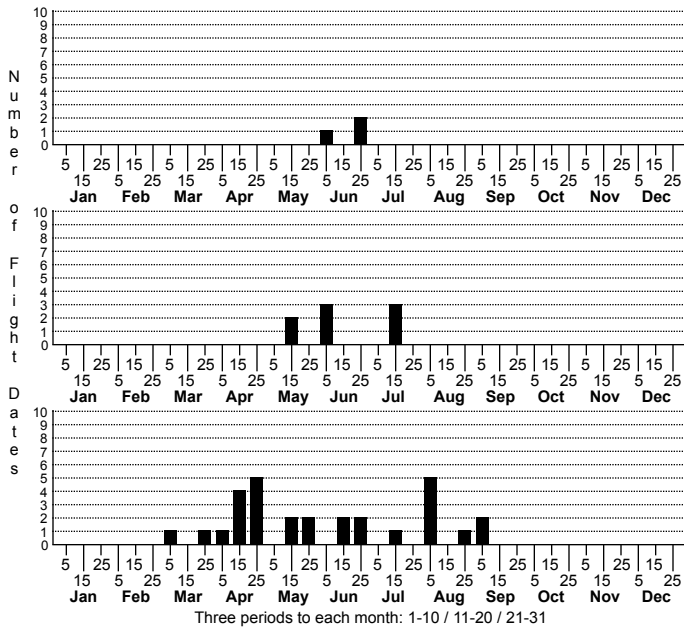


# *Antaeotricha leucillana* Pale Gray Bird-dropping Moth



FAMILY: *Depressariidae* SUBFAMILY: *Stenomatinae* TRIBE: [*Stenomatiini*]

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: The genus *Antaeotricha* is endemic to the New World and includes nearly 400 species of mostly neotropical species. Twenty species are currently recognized in North America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Duckworth (1964)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Marquis et al. (2019)

ID COMMENTS: This species is very similar to *A. schlaegeri* and the two cannot be reliably separated using photographs. The following description is based in part on the description by Duckworth (1964) and applies to both species. The face is white and the labial palp is white with a sprinkling of gray to dusky scales. The thorax is white dorsally with a conspicuous brownish-black tuft posteriorly. The ground color of the forewing is white, and the basal half has a dark brown or blackish patch that extends along the inner margin to one-third or more before phasing into gray. The remainder of the wing has a series of wormy, light gray to grayish brown marks that are more concentrated on the apical half. In addition to these, there are two broad subterminal bands and a narrower terminal band near the base of the fringe that are also light gray to grayish brown. The subterminal bands are sometimes blurred or otherwise indistinct, and the terminal band is often represented by a row of spots. The bands and wormy marks terminate before reaching the costa, except for one or two small marks near the wing base. The fringe has a series of four or five blackish spots near the base. The abdomen is white and the hindwing is very pale tan with white cilia. The legs are whitish, and the tarsi have a series of dark rings. The foreleg is generally more smoky than the others. *Antaeotricha leucillana* and *A. schlaegeri* are best distinguished by either size or genitalia. Wing length or total length measurements are essential for identification, and photo submissions must include a size reference such as a mm ruler or a coin. Adults of *A. schlaegeri* from North Carolina typically measure between 12-14 mm total length versus 10 mm or less for *A. leucillana*.

DISTRIBUTION: In the US, the range extends from the northeastern states westward to Iowa, eastern Kansas, and central Texas, and southward to southern Texas, the Gulf Coast, and southern Florida (Duckworth, 1964). In Canada, scattered populations occur from Alberta eastward to Nova Scotia (Pohl et al. (2018). As of 2023, our records show an essentially statewide distribution, with the species well-represented in all three physiographic provinces.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Populations in North Carolina appear to be univoltine in the Blue Ridge and possibly bivoltine in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain where the flight season is more prolonged. As of 2023, our records extends from early March through early-September.

HABITAT: The larvae are polyphagous and use numerous species of hardwood trees. Local populations occur in wooded residential neighborhoods as well as natural communities such as bottomland forests, mesic hardwood slopes, and mixed hardwood-pine forests.

FOOD: The larvae feed on a diverse group of hardwood trees, and do not strongly depend on oaks as is the case with *A. schlaegeri* (Prentice, 1966; Covell, 1984; Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2010). The known hosts include Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), River Birch (*B. nigra*), Paper Birch (*B. papyrifera*), Roughleaf Dogwood (*Cornus asperifolia*), American Ash (*Fraxinus americana*), Common Apple (*Malus domestica*), American Hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), Bigtooth Aspen (*Populus grandidentata*), Lombardy Poplar (*P. nigra*), Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*), Northern Red Oak (*Q. rubra*), Willow (*Salix*), American Basswood (*Tilia americana*), American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), Northern Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) and an ornamental shrub, Nepalese Firethorn (*Pyracantha crenulata*). In North Carolina, a larva has been reared from River Birch.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults occasionally visit lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S5

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

COMMENTS: Populations appear to be locally common where suitable hardwood forests are present.