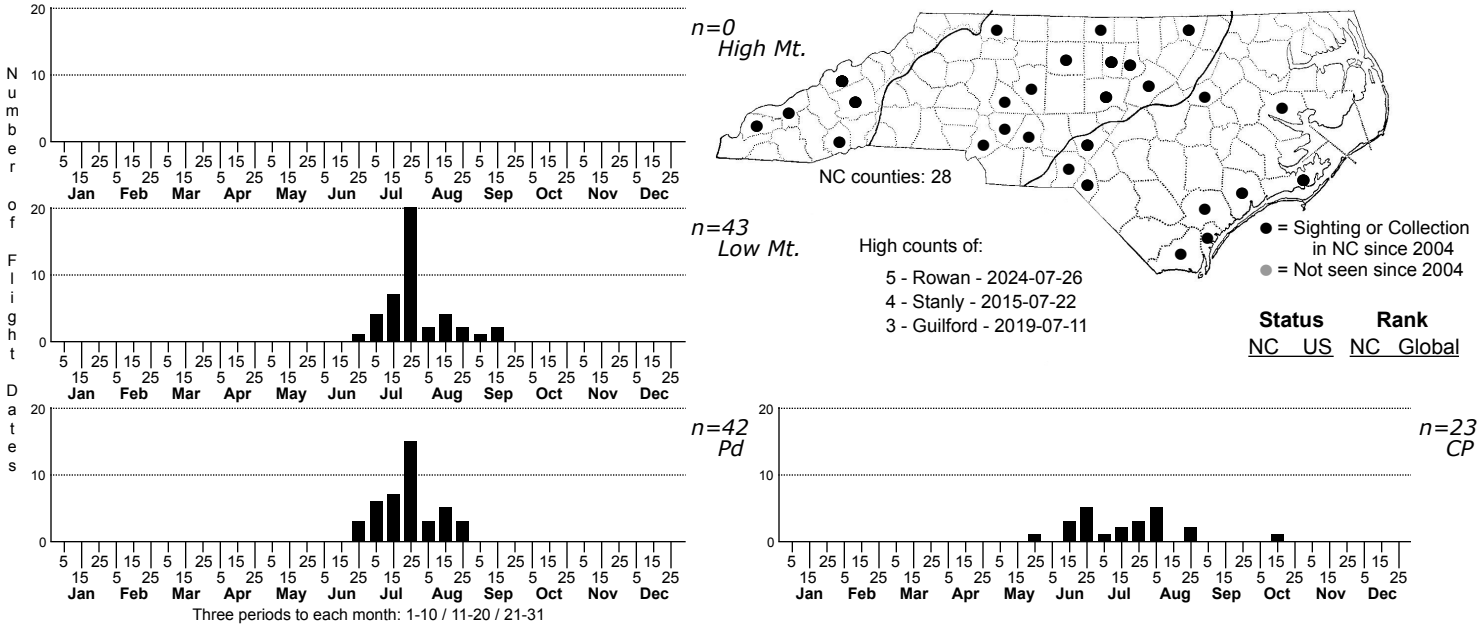
Inga sparsiciliella Black-marked Inga Moth



FAMILY: Oecophoridae SUBFAMILY: Oecophorinae TRIBE: Oecophorini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Leckie and Beadle, 2018
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hodges (1974)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This species is distinctive in having sharply contrasting black marks on a white or light yellowish white background. The detailed description that follows is primarily based on Clarke (1941). The ground color of the labial palp, the basal fourth of the antenna, and the head, thorax, and forewing is white to pale yellowish white. The basal half of the labial palp is outwardly blackish fuscous, and the outer three-fourths of the antenna is brownish fuscous. Prominent black or blackish fuscous marks occur at the base of the costa, at the inner angle adjoining the thorax, and along the costa at about two-thirds the wing length. The costal mark at two-thirds is the largest and extends to near the middle of the wing. A small discal spot is present at the basal third. An outwardly curved line of blackish-fuscous fine spots extends posteriorly from the outer edge of the large costal spot then loops back to the inner margin. The spots are sometimes united to form a nearly solid line, and may be poorly represented on some specimens. The whitish cilia have flecks of dark scales that are often concentrated near the base. The hindwing, cilia and legs are brownish fuscous.

DISTRIBUTION: Inga sparsiciliella is found in the eastern US and the south Texas border region of Mexico. Populations occur along the East Coast from southeastern Pennsylvania and Maryland to southern Florida, and westward to Kentucky, Arkansas, southeastern Oklahoma, and eastern and central Texas.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults have been collected from February through October in different regions of the country, with a seasonal peak in July and August. Local populations are single-brooded in the North and possibly double-brooded in the southern portion of the range (Hodges, 1974). North Carolina populations appear to be single-brooded. As of 2020, our records extend from July through mid-September, with a seasonal peak of activity in July.

HABITAT: The larvae have never been discovered and the habitats are poorly documented. Many of our records are from semi-wooded residential neighborhoods. Others include an old field, a pasture and forest interface, and a dry, upland forested slope.

FOOD: Despite being widespread and somewhat common in the eastern US, the hosts have never been discovered. This is the case for almost every Inga species in North America. Hodges (1974) noted that there is only one species where the hosts are known, and the larvae feed on the underground roots of two composites. It is uncertain if Inga sparsiciliella and other Inga do the same.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S4S5

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

COMMENTS: This species occurs statewide and is seemingly secure.