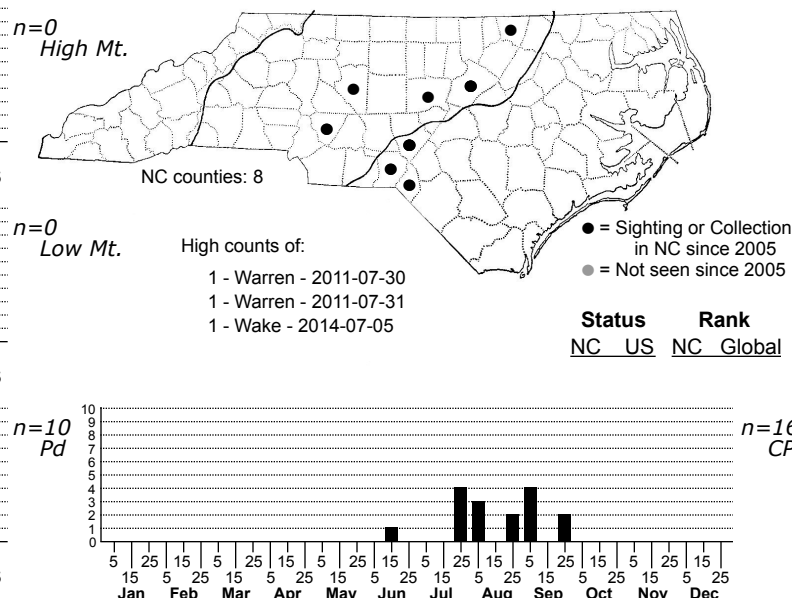
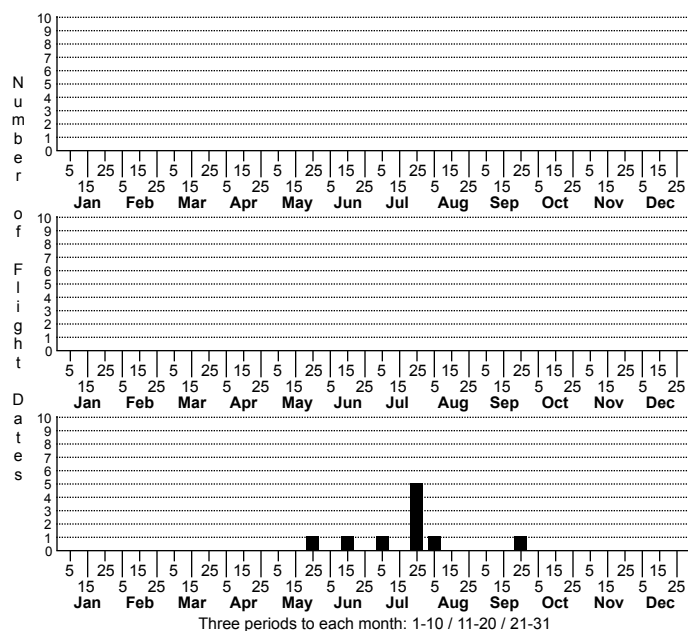


Inga cretacea Chalky Inga



FAMILY: Oecophoridae SUBFAMILY: Oecophorinae TRIBE: Oecophorini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Clarke (1941); Hodges (1974)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description is primarily based on that of Clarke (1941). The labial palp, head, and forewing are chalky white to sordid white and more or less stippled with fine brown scales. These are often more concentrated on the apical half of the wing. The basal two-fifths of the second segment of the labial palp is brown outwardly, and the eyes are narrowly edged with brown in front. The antenna is brown. The base of the costa of some specimens is narrowly brown, but frequently not, and is concolorous with the wings. The wing usually has three small brown spots before the subterminal line. These include two discal spots, and a third spot that is posterior to and inwardly from the anterior discal spot. An outwardly curved subterminal line of brown spots extends from near the costa posteriorly, then loops back towards the inner margin. It is often faint or only represented by a few brown spots in the subterminal region. The hindwing and cilia are brownish, and the legs are whitish and strongly overlaid with brown. The abdomen is whitish and somewhat suffused with light brown above. Hodges (1974) noted that this species is geographically variable, with specimens from southern Arizona, Oklahoma, and Florida often being much darker than the typical chalky white forms. This species superficially resembles *Machimia tentoriferella*, but the latter has reddish ochreous wings, a black mark on the posterior tip of the thorax, and larger and more diffuse dark spots.

DISTRIBUTION: *Inga cretacea* is found over a large swath of the southern US. The range extends along the Atlantic Seaboard from Maryland and Virginia to southern Florida, then westward through Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas to south-central Arizona. As of 2020, our records for North Carolina are all from the central portion of the state and primarily from Piedmont locations.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The flight season is variable depending on locale, with some populations appearing to be single-brooded and others with two or more broods (Hodges, 1974). Adults have been taken from April through November. Populations in North Carolina have a single brood and a narrow flight period. As of 2020, all of our records are from July.

HABITAT: The larvae have never been discovered and the preferred habitats are unknown. Our records are mostly from semi-wooded residential neighborhoods.

FOOD: Despite being widespread 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 North American species where the hosts are known, and the larvae feed on the underground roots of two composites. It is uncertain if *I. cretacea* and other *Inga* do the same.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults appear to occasionally visit lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SU

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

COMMENTS: Seemingly uncommon in the state, but this could be an artifact of the brief flight period. We currently do not have sufficient information on distribution and abundance of this species to assess its conservation status.