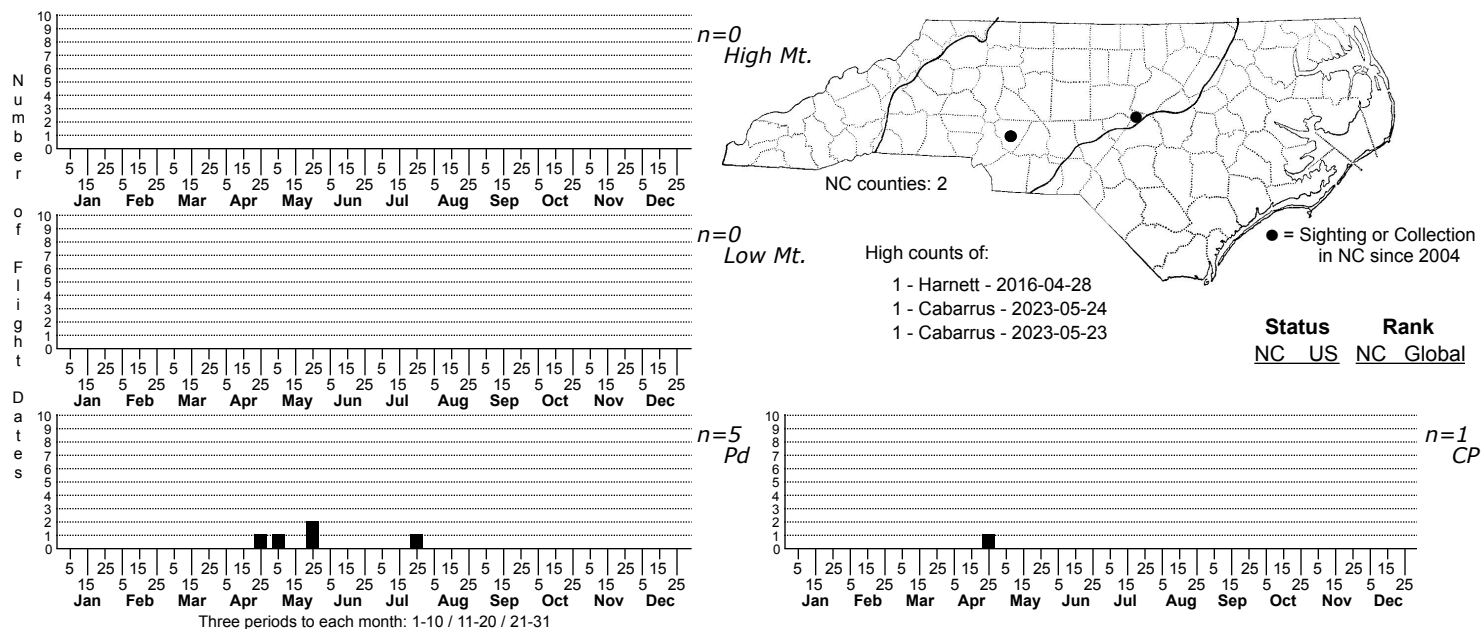


## *Leucania calidior* Cane Wainscot



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Leucaniini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of 30 species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010; Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2015), 16 of which have been recorded in North Carolina. Previously included in Subfamily Hadeninae but moved to the much expanded Noctuinae by Lafontaine and Schmidt. They also included it in Tribe Leucaniini along with Mythimna. Additionally, Forbes (1936) grouped calidior with *L. inermis*, *ursula*, *pseudargyria* -- all found in North Carolina -- and the Floridian pilpalpis in the *Pseudargyria* Complex.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1936, 1954); Poole (2016)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium-large Wainscot. The forewings are a yellowish brown, partly tinged with a pinkish wash and with darker gray areas located between the orbicular and reniform, before the orbicular, and in a triangular area located in the lower half of the wing apex. Both the orbicular and reniform spots are paler cream, with a darker spot in lower half of the reniform. The antemedian line is fairly inconspicuous but the postmedian is somewhat more strongly defined, following a strongly dentate course and sometimes appearing to form a double line, with dark points on the veins alternating with somewhat weaker crescents located more medially in the interspaces. Hindwings are dark fuscous. Other members of the *Pseudargyria* Complex have a similar pattern, but differ somewhat in ground color and size of the dark spot in the reniform. The structural characters described below -- particularly the male genitalia -- provide a more certain way to identify these species.

DISTRIBUTION: North Carolina records come solely from the Coastal Plain, although its host plants also occur in the Piedmont and Mountains

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: North Carolina records all come from sites with canebrakes, primarily from forested areas where fire is infrequent but with one record from a regularly burned Streamhead Canebrake in the Fall-line Sandhills.

FOOD: Monophagous, believed to feed solely on Cane (*Arundinaria* spp.) (Quinter, pers. com.)

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: Our records all come from blacklight but members of this genus generally come well to bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G2G4 S1S2

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be completely restricted to areas containing extensive populations of Cane but like many cane-feeding specialists, appears to be absent from many areas of apparently suitable habitat. We do not believe that it has simply been undersampled, however, or mistaken for the more common members of its species complex. The canebrake fauna has been especially targeted in moth inventories conducted in North Carolina, due to the large number of specialists and/or endemic species it contains. Unlike some of even rare members of this group, moreover, this species flies during the main part of the growing season and occupies a particularly large geographic range, occurring in areas on both sides of the Appalachians (E. Quinter, pers. comm.). More needs to be learned about the life history and actual population sizes of this species in order to accurately determine its conservation status.