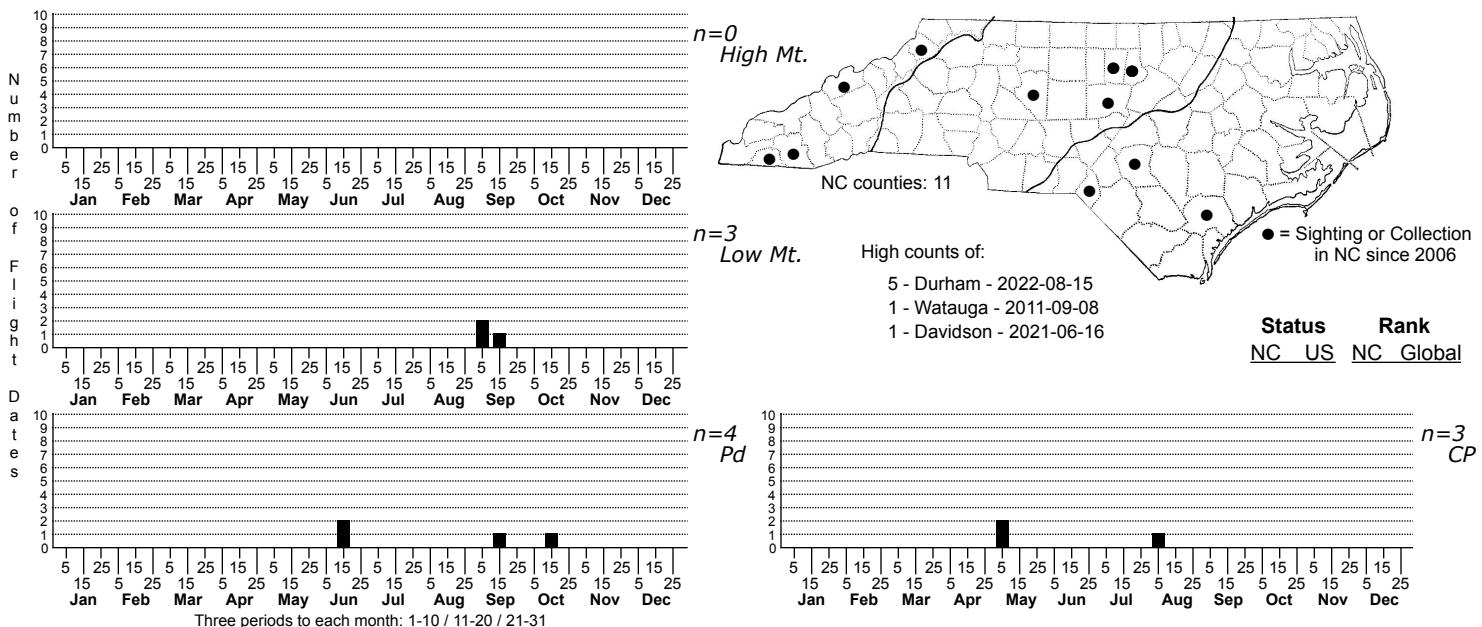


Idioglossa miraculosa None



FAMILY: Oecophoridae SUBFAMILY: Stathmopodinae TRIBE: [Stathmopodinae]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: <i>Idioglossa</i> is a relatively small genus with fewer than a dozen described species that are mostly found in the Old World. <i>Idioglossa miraculosa</i> is the only known member that occurs in the Western Hemisphere.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1923)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Microleps.org

ID COMMENTS: <i>Idioglossa miraculosa</i> is a small, but distinctive moth that typically rests with the wings partially spread to reveal three metallic silvery fascias on the hindwing. It also has a pair of exceptionally long maxillary tufts that extend anteriorly when resting. The following detailed description is mostly based on that of Forbes (1923).

The overall body and forewing coloration varies from light straw to yellowish brown. The palps and maxillary tufts are nearly white, and the exceptionally long maxillary tufts project well forward when a moth is resting. The forewing has an oblique, brownish, v-shaped fascia that is edged with violet-silver at about one third. It is asymmetric and nearer the base on the dorsal margin. A second brownish fascia runs obliquely outward from the beginning of the costal fringe and is edged within with silver. The hindwing is nearly concolorous with the forewing and has three silvery fascias on a darker ground. The fringe of both wings has brown shade at about two-thirds the wing length that produces a conspicuous brown band when the wings are spread. Small dark brown scale-tufts are present in the dorsal fringe of the forewing and hindwing towards the wing base.

DISTRIBUTION: <i>Idioglossa miraculosa</i> is restricted to the eastern US. The range extends from central Texas eastward along the Gulf States, then northward to Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and Maryland. As of 2022, we have scattered records from all three physiographic provinces.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Local populations typically have two or three generations per year, with non-wintering larvae present from May through late August (Microleps.org). Larvae from the final brood overwinter and pupate the following spring.

HABITAT: Local populations are restricted to where the host plants are present, particularly witchgrasses. Typical habitats include the margins of swamp forests, bottomland hardwoods, wet ditch lines, and mesic slopes in the mountains.

FOOD: Deer-tongue Witchgrass (<i>Dichanthelium clandestinum</i>) appears to be the primary host plant, although other plants are occasionally used (Robinson et al., 2010). In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded on Deer-tongue Witchgrass, as well as River Oats (<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>), Savanna Panicgrass (<i>Phanopyrum gymnocarpon</i>), and Virginia Dayflower (<i>Commelina virginica</i>).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults do not appear to be strongly attracted to lights and local populations are perhaps best documented by searching for feeding signs and cocoons on <i>Dichanthelium</i> and other host plants.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: [GNR] S3S4

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 widespread but uncommon within North Carolina.
March 2026

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft