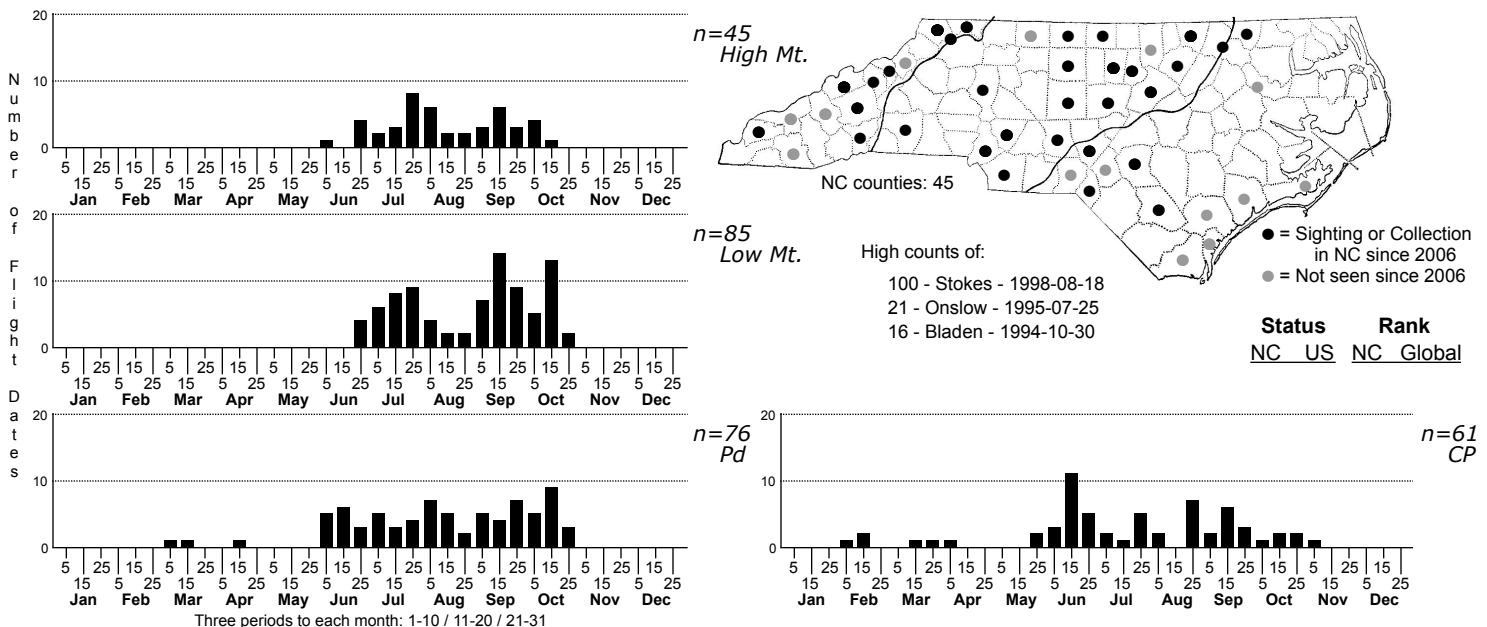


Abagrotis alternata Greater Red Dart



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Noctuini
TAXONOMIC COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Abagrotis alternata* is generally similar in coloration and patterning to *A. anchocelioides*, but tends to have larger spots, along with an orbicular spot that is more elongated than that of the relatively rounded orbicular spot of *A. anchocelioides*. The subterminal line is interrupted on the veins or consists of separated dots, and it lacks a dark blotch where it meets the costa as seen on *A. anchocelioides*. There is often a strong outward bulge about 1/4 below the apex in *alternata*, but is rarely present in *anchocelioides* or is much less prominent (J.B. Sullivan, pers. obs.). According to Lafontaine (1998), the second segment of the labial palpus is unicolorous reddish-brown, whereas in *A. alternata*, the apex is yellow-buff, contrasting with the reddish-brown sides.

DISTRIBUTION: Nearly statewide, but relatively uncommon on the coast and potentially absent from some counties.

FLIGHT COMMENT: *A. alternata* is uncommon in mid-summer when *A. anchocelioides* is at its peak but is abundant in the fall (J.B. Sullivan, pers. obs.).

HABITAT: Woodlands and forests (Wagner et al., 2011). Our records come almost entirely from hardwood forests, with few records from heathy flatwoods or sand ridges. Both dry and mesic hardwood forests are used.

FOOD: Larvae reportedly feed on dead leaves in early instars but switch to hardwood trees and shrubs in later stages. Wagner et al. (2011) state that most records come from blueberry (*Vaccinium*) and oak (*Quercus*), but other heaths, cherry (*Prunus*), and walnut (*Juglans*) are also used. Beadle and Leckie (2012) also list hickory (*Carya*), apple (*Malus*), and spruce (*Picea*). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: