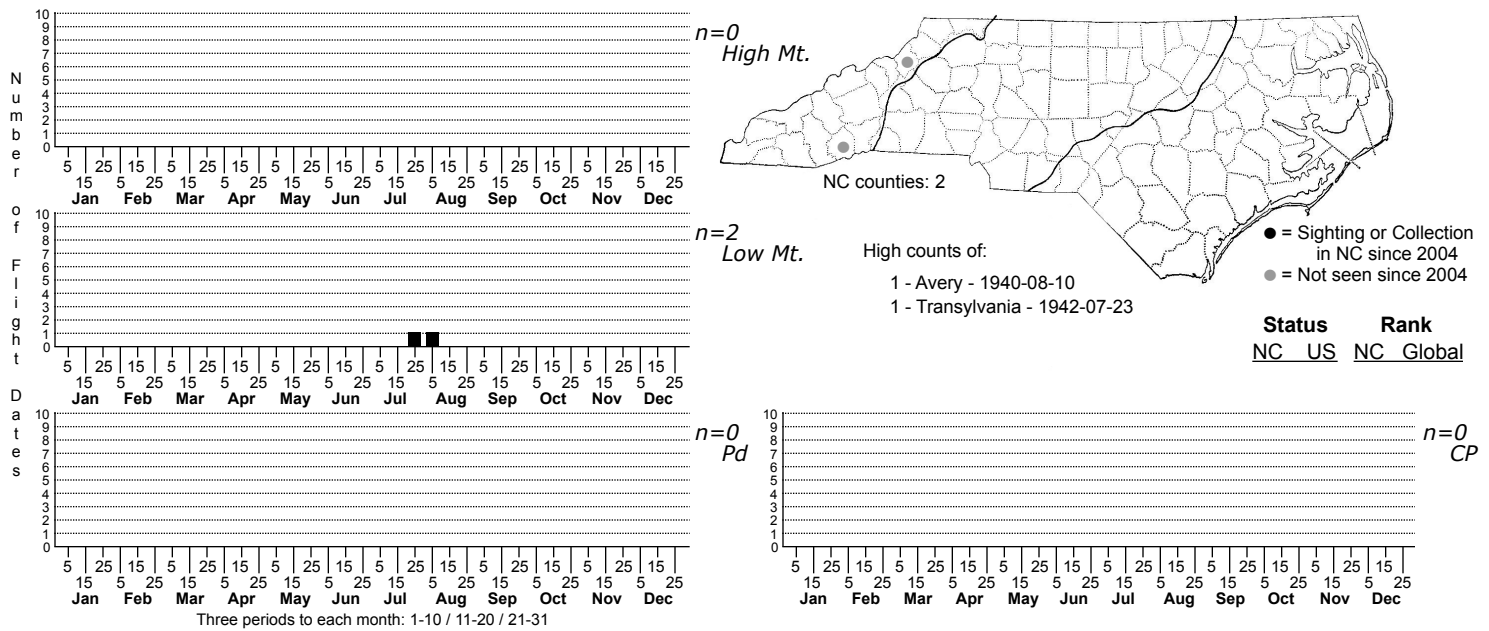


## *Derrima stellata* Pink Star Moth



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Heliiothinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: The sole member of this genus, occurring in the eastern North America from Maine to Florida and west to Texas and Oklahoma.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: Unmistakable, with pink on its head and thorax and on the costal and outer margin of the forewing. The center of the forewing is yellow, enclosing a prominent silver reniform spot and a claviform that may be either silver or dark. The postmedian also consists of a series of silver denticles. Hindwings are straw yellow, variably shaded with brown and pink.

DISTRIBUTION: Both of our records come from the Mountains, although this species occurs at low elevations in Florida

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to fly in mid-summer but we do not have enough data to detect any pattern. Covell (1984) reports that it has two flights, in spring and summer.

HABITAT: Not described in North Carolina. Kons and Borth (2006) list this species as a Xeric Oak-Pine Scrub specialist in Florida, and it has been reported from open maritime habitats in New York (New York Natural Heritage Program, 2015). While the habitats are unrecorded for the two North Carolina records, dry-xeric stands of hardwoods or open rock outcrops seem likely.

FOOD: Hosts are poorly documented. Beadle & Leckie (2018) list asters, walnut, rose, and sumac, but we are uncertain of the source of these claims.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: Leroy Koehn observed several males flying during the day and visiting flowers. Also comes to light to some extent, but could be overlooked in standard moth surveys if it flies primarily during the day.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 SH

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation does not confer any legal protection, however, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: For such a conspicuously marked, wide-ranging species, *Derrima stellata* appears to be particularly poorly known. It is considered rare from North Carolina northward (NatureServe, 2016), but even in the South, little or nothing is known about its host plant preferences and larval development. While it appears to prefer open habitats, nothing seems to be known about habitat specialization in the Southern Appalachians, where we have our only two records. Currently, it is unclear whether it still occurs in North Carolina, let alone what specific conservation needs it may have.