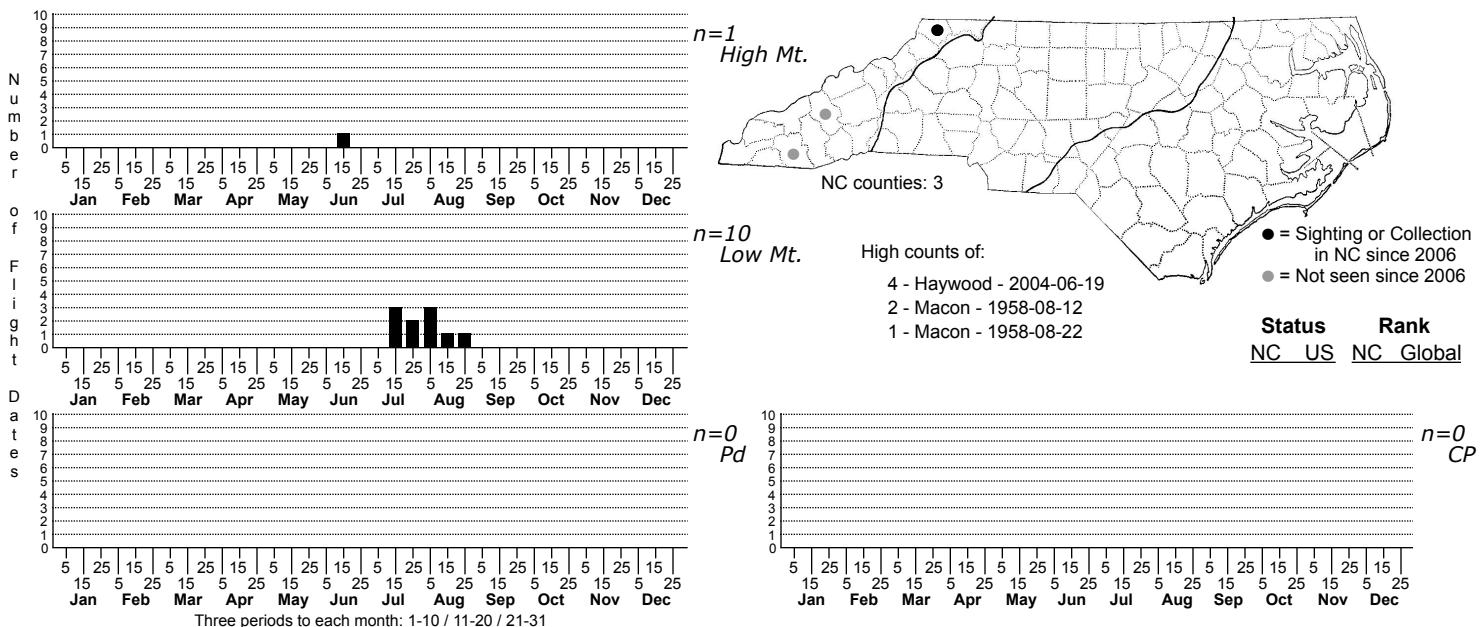


Pseudopostega cretea White Eye-cap Moth



FAMILY: Opostegidae **SUBFAMILY:** Oposteginae **TRIBE:** [Opostegini]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Pseudopostega* contains a group of very small leaf mining moths. The adults have a conspicuous head tuft, a large basal eye cap on the antenna, and relatively short and broad bodies and wings. There are 84 described species in the New World, with the majority of these occurring in tropical and subtropical regions. Nine species occur in the US, but only three are found in North Carolina and adjoining states. Davis and Stonis (2007) published a monograph on *Pseudopostega* species of the New World that is the authoritative work on this genus.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Davis and Stonis, 2007.

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Pseudopostega cretea* is a small, white to pale-yellowish brown moth with a conspicuous head tuft, a large basal eye cap, and a short, broad wing. The forewing is usually white dorsally with a large, brown, oblique dorsal spot that occurs about midway along the dorsal margin. The spot can vary substantially in size. In many specimens the wing shades from white proximally, to pale gray or yellowish brown near the apical third or so. There are two or three brown, subapical, costal strigulae, two similar tornal strigulae, and a small brown to fuscous apical spot. These are most evident on specimens with white wings, and are often obscure or missing in specimens that have dark apical regions. The anterior costal strigula is strongly oblique and extends to the apical spot; the second strigula is shorter and less oblique and also terminates at the apical spot. In some specimens an additional third costal strigula is evident that radiates from the spot towards the apex. The hindwing is light brown to brown both dorsally and ventrally. In addition to the typical light morphs, a melanic form exists that is uniformly dark brown. This form has only been found in populations in Michigan and Maine (Davis and Stonis, 2007), but could potentially occur at higher elevations in the southern Appalachians. Reliable identification of the three *Pseudopostega* species that occurs in North Carolina and vicinity (*P. albogaleriella*; *P. cretea*; *P. quadristrigella*) requires examination of the genitalia.

DISTRIBUTION: *Pseudopostega cretea* is widely distributed in eastern North America from southern Canada south to central Texas and northern Florida. Geographic isolates have also been found in southeastern British Columbia and Oregon. As of 2019, all of our North Carolina specimens are from the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: This species usually flies from May to July (with one early August record) in the southern USA, and from June to August across the northern part of the range (Davis and Stonis, 2007). Our records are from June-August.

HABITAT: The habitat requirements of this species are poorly known because of lack of information about the host plants. Specimens have been collected from a bog in Ashe Co., from Purchase Knob in the Smokies, and from around Highlands.

FOOD: The host plants have not been documented.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Specimens are attracted to both UV and mercury vapor 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: We currently do not have sufficient information on the distribution and abundance of this species to confidently assess its conservation status within the state.