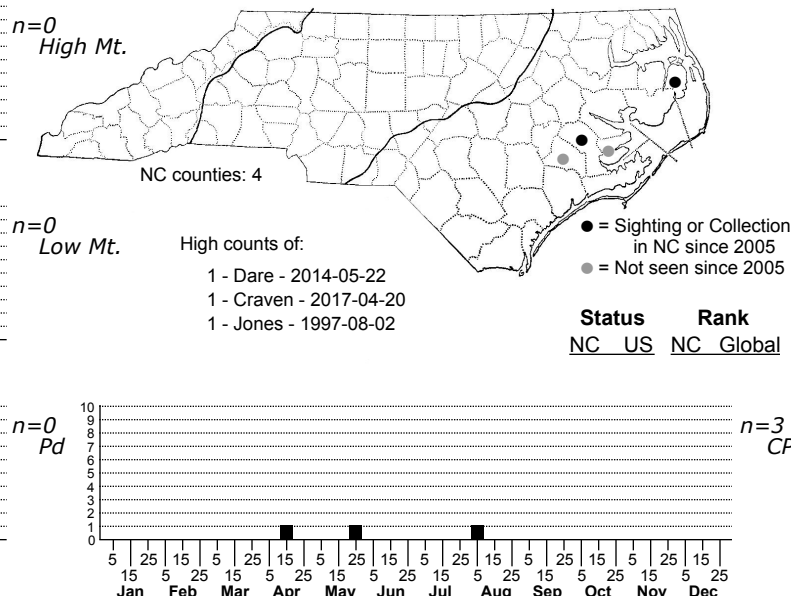


Homaledra sabalella Palm Leaf Skeletonizer Moth



FAMILY: Pterolonchidae SUBFAMILY: TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: *Homaledra* is a small genus with only four recognized species that are found in the New World. Two apparently undescribed species are present in Florida (Hayden, 2018).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Leckie and Beadle (2018)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: (Howard and Abreu (2007)

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctive moth with the head, antenna, thorax, and forewing all uniformly coffee-cream colored to darker grayish tan. The forewings are narrow and elongated, and held flat when resting. The thorax has a tiny black dot at the posterior tip, and the forewing has two elongated dots, one adjoining the inner margin at about one-half the wing length, and a second near the middle of the wing at about four-fifths. A fine row of elongated terminal spots are present and best developed in fresh specimens. The legs are light brown with a few faint blackish blotches, and the foreleg often has a prominent black tip.

DISTRIBUTION: *Homaledra sabalella* is found in the southeastern US and the Greater Antilles, including Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico (Howard and Abreu (2007). This species is common and widespread in Florida. The range extends westward along the coast to eastern Texas, and northward along coastal regions of South Carolina to central North Carolina. The range may have expanded to some extent since palms have been widely planted as ornamentals in many areas of the Southeast. As of 2021, we have records from three counties near the coast.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Local populations are multivoltine and active rear-round in Florida. Outside of Florida, the adults have been found from April through August. As of 2021, our two dated recorded are from April and May.

HABITAT: Our two records for this species as of 2021 come from sites along the coast where *Sabal minor* occurs but where *Sabal palmetto* is only present as cultivated specimens. Its presence at our one natural stand of *Sabal palmetto* on Bald Head Island needs to be determined.

FOOD: This species was described by Chambers (1880) from specimens collected from palmettos. Although Cabbage Palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*) and Dwarf Palmetto (*S. minor*) appear to be the most important native hosts, Howard and Abreu (2007) have now documented it on 78 species of palms.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the large, skeletonized areas of palm leaves are easy to spot.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S1S3

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

COMMENTS: This species reaches the northern limit of its range in North Carolina, where it is uncommon.