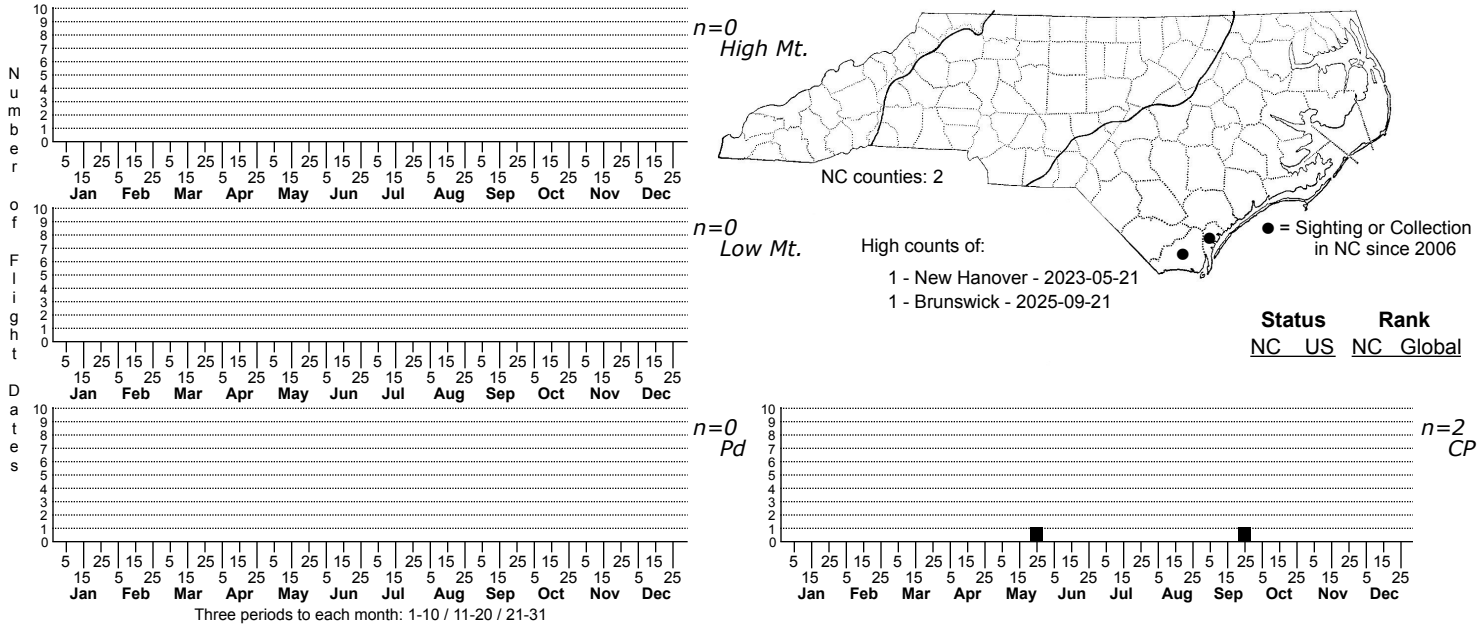
Homaledra knudsoni None



FAMILY: Pterolonchidae SUBFAMILY: TRIBE:
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: Homaledra is a small genus with only six recognized species that are found in the New World, including two species that were recently described from Florida (Hayden, 2021).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hayden (2021)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Hayden (2021)

ID COMMENTS: Homaledra knudsoni is a palm-feeding species that was described recently (Hayden, 2021) and closely resembles H. sabalella. The head, thorax and ground color of the forewing are all beige. The antenna is distinctly longer than the forewing, and is similar in color except for becoming gray towards the tip. Most specimens also have a well-developed pecten on the scape at the base of the antenna. The thorax has a black spot at the tip, and the forewing has white scales on the veins, especially along the radial veins that are located at around one-half the wing length. The black spots on the forewing include a small, elongated spot just below the inner margin at around two-fifths from the wing base, a similar spot at around three-fourths that is more centrally located, and a line of black dashes that extends along the outer fringe and terminates on the costa near the second black spot. The hindwing is dark gray.

Homaledra knudsoni closely resembles H. sabalella. Both species occur in North Carolina and are similar in having a beige-colored forewing with black spots. They are most easily separated by the length and color of the antennae. For H. knudsoni, the antennae are longer than the forewing and grayish at the tip, while in H. sabalella they are shorter than the forewing and uniformly tan-colored. Homaledra knudsoni also has a pecten at the base of the antenna, and the veins of the forewing have whitish scales (absent in H. sabalella). Finally, the line of terminal black dashes is more prominent and extends farther basally in H. knudsoni.

DISTRIBUTION: This species has subtropical affinities, with specimens known from southern Texas, Mexico (Yucatan Peninsula), and peninsular Florida (Hayden, 2021). As of 2025, isolated records are also known from a coastal site in southeastern South Carolina, along with two records from North Carolina from New Hanover County and Brunswick County. Hayden (2021) noted that the range likely expanded within the last few decades, with the species moving into Florida from Texas.

FLIGHT COMMENT: As of 2025, adults have been observed from March through October in different areas of the range, and likely produce two or more broods annually. As of 2025, our two records are from late-May and late-September.

HABITAT: Local populations are generally associated with either residential neighborhoods where ornamental palms are planted, or natural communities with Cabbage Palmetto.

FOOD: The larvae feed on palms (Hayden, 2021), with Cabbage Palmetto (Sabal palmetto) being the most frequently reported host in Florida. Other hosts in Florida include Jelly Palm (Butia capitata), Chinese Fan Palm (Livistona chinensis), Saw palmetto (Serenoa repens), a cultivated Trachycarpus species and Mexican Fan Palm (Washingtonia robusta).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the feeding damage and frass tubes are easy to observe on the host plants.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S1S2]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: As of 2025 we have only two records, and both are from the southern Coastal Plain where there appears to be a northern disjunct population.