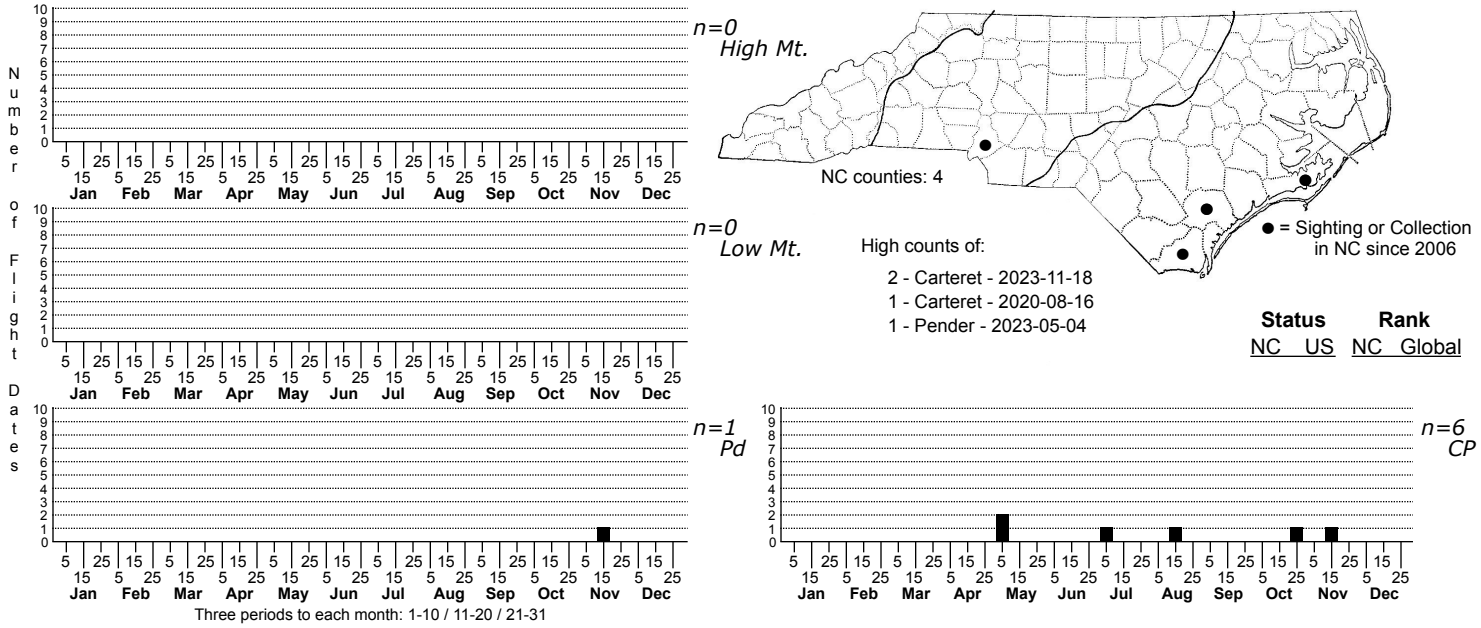
Anatrachyntis badia Florida Pink Scavenger Moth



FAMILY: Cosmopterigidae SUBFAMILY: Cosmopteriginae TRIBE:
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: Pyroderces is a genus of small comet moths that are primarily found in tropical, subtropical and warm temperate parts of the world. They are well represented in Australia and the Old World tropics, and there are three species that have been traditionally recognized in North America. Hodges (1978) placed our three species in the genus Pyroderces, but later changed these to Sathrobrota (Hodges, 1962). Europeans usually place these in the genus Anatrachyntis, and current taxonomy also treats the North American species as being in this genus.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hodges (1982)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Adamski et al. (2006)

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based mostly on that of Hodges (1962). The labial palp is white with a tinge of buff, with the second segment with a tawny band on outer surface at one-fifth and three-fifths, along with a tawny apex. The third segment has three brown annulations, with one post-basal, one medial, and one pre-apical. The antenna has a buff-white scape with tawny dusting on the dorsal surface, and a white shaft with dark-brown annulations. The apical fourth has three longer, dark segments with white and dark-brown annulations in between. The vertex, thorax and forewing have an overall pale-tawny coloration, with the latter having rather complex and variable patterning. Specimens typically have salt-and-peppery striae due to black tipped scales preceded or followed by buff-white scales. These include 1) a sub-basal transverse band or patch at around one-fourth that does not reach the costa or inner margin, 2) a similar transverse band or patch in the center of the wing at one-half, 3) a subcostal line from three-fifths to four-fifths, and 4) a posteriorly-oblique ciliary line that extends from the tornus to the apex. The cilia are gray-brown and the hindwings fuscous.

The hind tibia is tawny on the basal two-fifths of the outer surface and has an oblique white streak from the middle tibial spur. The distal half of the hind tibia is dark-brown, with the apex pale buff-white and the tibial spurs white or with black at the middle (see structural images below). The tarsal segments are dark-brown basally and pale apically. This species is very similar to P. rileyi, and is most reliably identified using genitalia.

DISTRIBUTION: Anatrachyntis badia is found in relatively warm climates and occurs in the US as two groups: one in central and southern California that may have been introduced, and the second in the southeastern US from eastern Texas eastward through the Gulf Coast states to southern Florida, and northward to the Carolinas. As of 2025, our records are all from the southern part of the state, including the Charlotte area and in coastal communities.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Local populations are multivoltine and can be found year-round in Florida and Alabama. As of 2025, our records extend from early-May through mid-November.

HABITAT: Local populations are generally associated with areas where sources of food such as decaying vegetation, citrus fruits or flower heads are available (see below).

FOOD: The larvae are mostly scavengers and feed on a variety of dried fruits and plant material. They also are known to feed on the live seed heads of Sorgum (Adamski et al., 2006). Hodges (1962) noted that many of the literature records for A. rileyi and A. badia are confounded due to misidentification. He reported them to use pine cones infested by Dioryctria moth larvae, rust-infected cones of Pinus elliottii, the cones of P. palustris, the pods of Cassia occidentalis, the dried fruits of peaches and loquat, limes, grapefruit, bananas, cabbage, the blossoms of coconut, and elm leaves. Heppner (2007) reports that larvae feed on scale insects, but also lists elm, pine, and peach. Ken Kneidel has recent reared several adults from dried, ornamental Zinnia seed heads. The larvae were presumably feeding on developing or mature seeds.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and can be reared from dried seed heads, pine cones and other sources of concentrated organic matter.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S2S4]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: