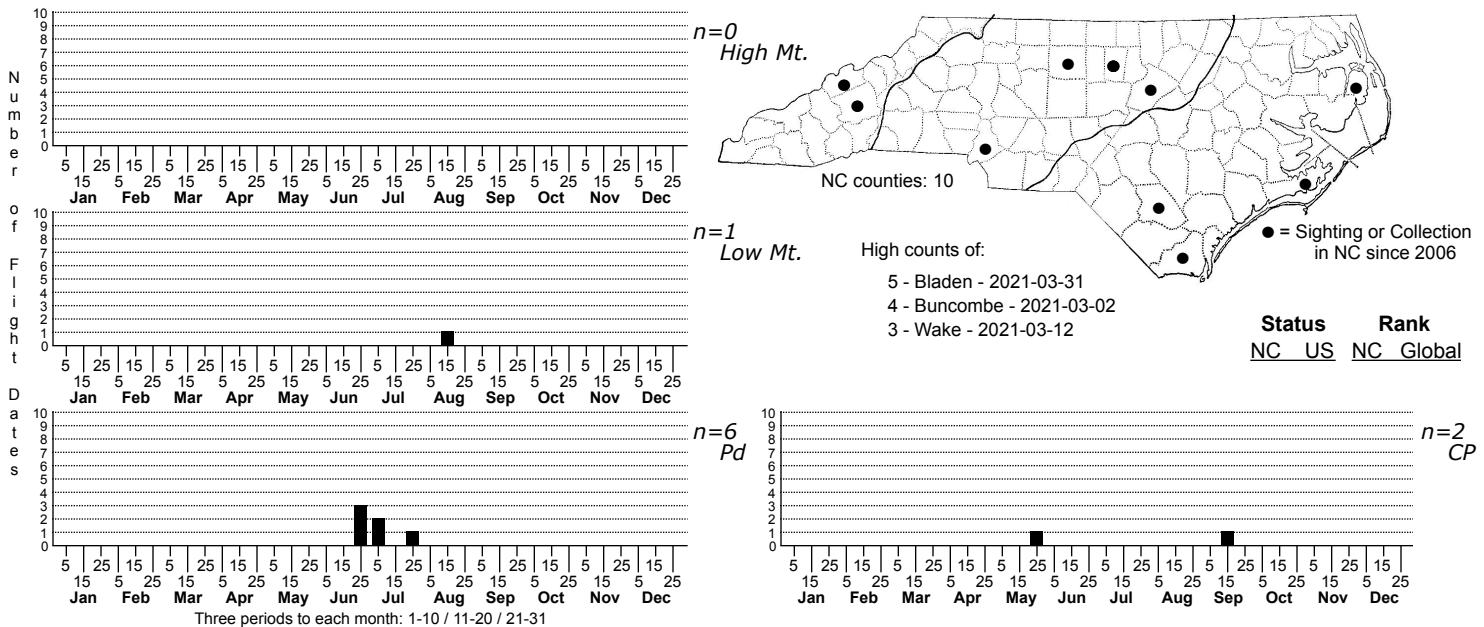


Limnaecia phragmitella Shy Cosmet Moth



FAMILY: Cosmopterigidae SUBFAMILY: Cosmopteriginae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Limnaecia* is a large genus with approximately 100 described species that occur mainly in Australasia and Oceania. One species occurs in North America. None are known from South America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Claassen's (1921)

ID COMMENTS: This is a rather distinctive small moth that has a streamlined tan body and two black discal dots in the gray streak that are ringed with white. The following detailed description is based on those by Forbes (1923) and Powell and Opler (2009). The adults are slender and the head, thorax, and ground of the forewings are tan or clay-colored. The labial palps are thin, recurved, and diverging, and terminate above the thorax. Each has two slender black lines on the third segment. The antenna is about two-thirds the wing length. The shaft is cream-colored with a series of black dots that resemble annuli, and the scape has a black line. The forewing is uniformly tan or clay-colored, except for a faint to distinct longitudinal gray streak. There are two small, black, discal dots in the gray streak that are partially or completely ringed with white. There is also a weaker black point or dash just posterior and inward to the first discal dot. It often has a white margin on the posterior half. The fringe is pale gray, and the hindwing is light gray with a nearly white fringe.

DISTRIBUTION: *Limnaecia phragmitella* is widely distributed around the world in association with cattails. This species is present in Europe, North Africa, Australia and New Zealand, as well as North America. Populations occur throughout North America where cattails grow locally, including most of southern Canada, the eastern US, and in scattered localities throughout the western US. Hodges (1978) noted that populations are extremely local, and that the adults do not appear to fly far from the food plants. We have records from all three physiographic provinces. Recent attempts to locate populations by breaking apart cattail heads and searching for larvae have been fruitful and have greatly increased our understanding of the distribution of this species in the state.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been found from April through October in areas outside of North Carolina, with a seasonal peak in June and July. Local emergence is timed to the flowering of cattails. As of 2021, our records are from late June through mid-August.

HABITAT: Local populations in North Carolina are primarily associated with Broadleaf Cattail, which is common in a variety of open, sunny, wetlands such as flooded ditches, marshes, and the edges of ponds and lakes.

FOOD: The known hosts in North America are Broadleaf Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and Narrowleaf Cattail (*T. angustifolia*) (Eiseman, 2024). In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded on Broadleaf Cattail.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights, and the larvae are common in cattail seed heads. Finding larvae in cattail heads is an easy way to gather new locality data for the state. The larvae of *Dicymolomia julianalis* are also often present in cattail heads, but can be easily distinguished by their unstriped abdomen.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S5

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This species is locally common where cattails are present and appears to be secure within the state.