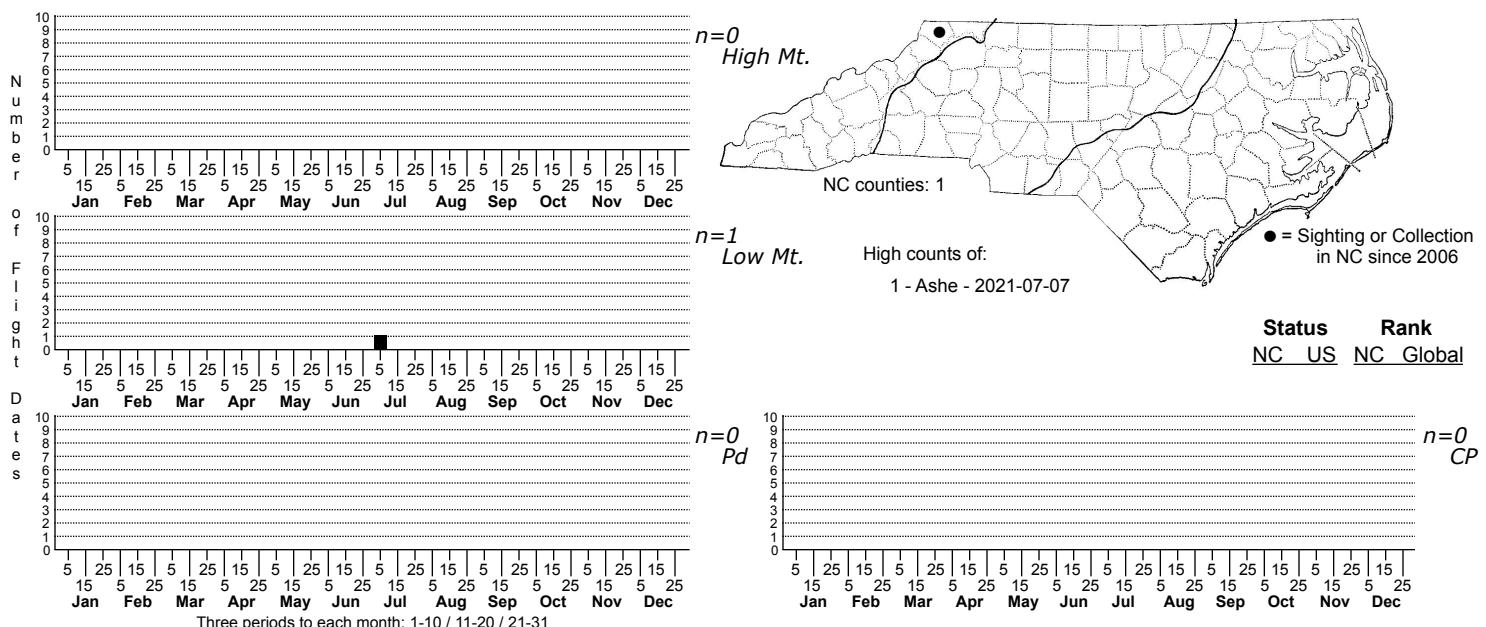


# Scythris basilaris None



FAMILY: Scythrididae SUBFAMILY: TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Scythris* is a member of the Family Scythrididae, whose members display a diversity of genital structures that is probably unsurpassed within any other family in the Lepidoptera (Landry, 1991). The extraordinarily diversity in genital morphology in the males of many taxa reaches such extremes that it is easy to recognize species, but difficult to delineate higher taxa. There are around 44 currently recognized species for the Nearctic region. North America has 14 described species, including 10 species of *Scythris*. Most are drably colored moths that superficially resemble one another. Landry (1991) found at least 300 undescribed species in North American collections alone based on genitalic differences, and estimated that there could be as many as 400 and 500 species of scythridids in North America. Many of these are in arid regions of the US.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Scythris basilaris* is a medium-sized scythridid with the upper surface of the body very dark brown. The forewing is dark-brown and distinctive in having a golden or yellowish streak in the fold that extends from the wing base to about one third the wing length, along with a similarly colored apical patch. The basal streak can vary from prominent to faint depending on individual variation and wear. The hind tibia also has a very long and prominent tibial brush that is characteristic of this species. In addition, the males have a dense anal tuft. The pattern of golden-yellow markings of the forewing over the dark-brown ground color distinguishes this species from those of all other Nearctic members of the Scythrididae (Landry, 1991).

DISTRIBUTION: *Scythris basilaris* is found in eastern North America and mostly in areas with cool climates, including Ontario and much of the northeastern US. The range extends from New Hampshire and Massachusetts westward across the Great Lakes region to Iowa, and southwestward mostly through the Appalachian region to West Virginia, southern Ohio, eastern Kentucky, and western North Carolina (Landry, 1991). There is one isolated record from central Florida. As of 2025, we have a single record from Ashe County.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Landry (1991) reported that the adults occur from mid-June to mid-July and are probably diurnal. As of 2025, our one record is from 7 July.

HABITAT: Local populations are often found in forest edge habitats and open woods.

FOOD: The host plants are poorly documented. Landry (1991) reported that two museum labels stated that this species was found on Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) and a second *Ceanothus* species, which suggests that this might be the host plant. Robinson et al. (2010) reported that the larvae feed on blackberries (*Rubus* spp.), but we are unaware for the basis for this. As of 2025, we do not have any larval records for North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are diurnally active and can sometimes be collected by sweeping low vegetation or searching for adults feeding on flowers such as *Achillea* or *Ceanothus*.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S2]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This species appears to reach its southern range limit in the Blue Ridge of North Carolina where we have only one record as of 2025.