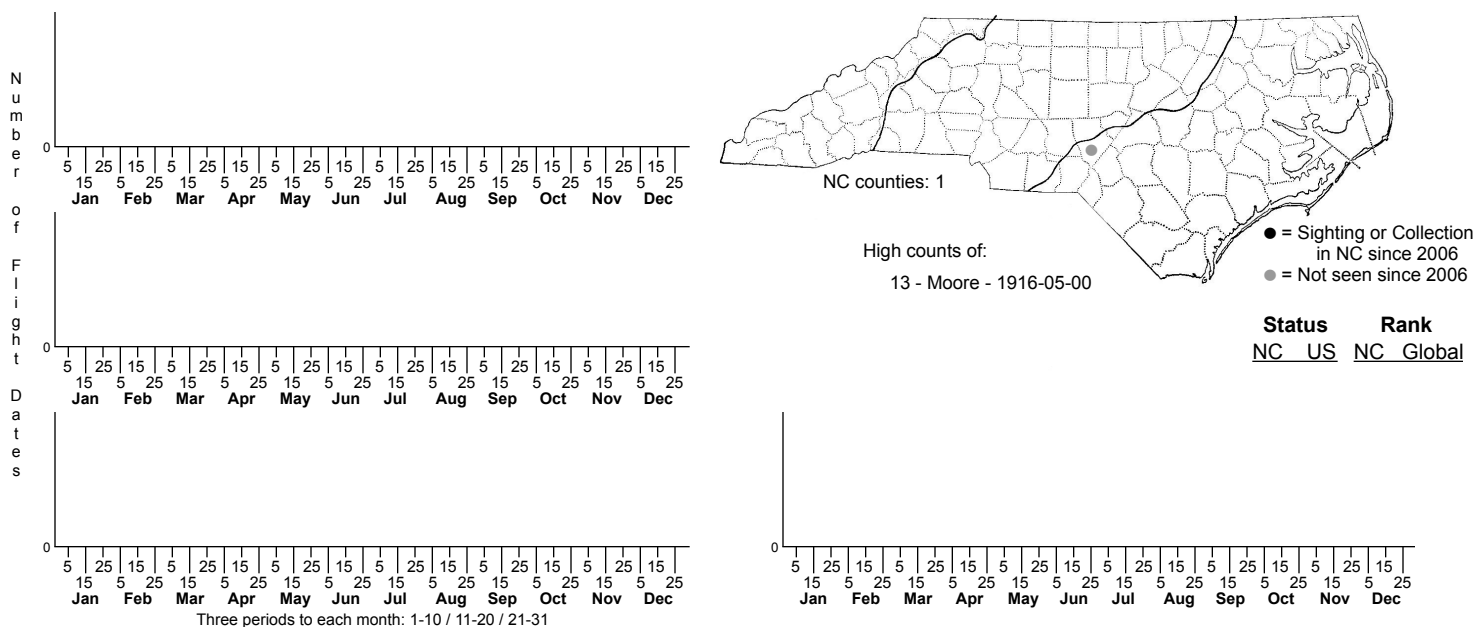


Scythris charon None



FAMILY: Scythrididae SUBFAMILY: Scythridinae TRIBE: [Scythridini]

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 extraordinary 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: Landry (1991)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: Adults are very small, dark brown moths with a distinctive, narrow longitudinal white streak in the fold of the forewing. The following description is based on that of Landry (1991). The labial palp has a white basal half, and an olive-brown distal half that is mixed with a few white scales. The apex almost reaches the level of the vertex. The antenna is shorter than half the length of the forewing, and is olive-brown except for white scales on the ventral surface of the basal quarter. The dorsal surface of the thorax is olive-brown, with a white lateral white stripe on each side that extends from the base of the collar to the tegula. The legs are mostly whitish. They are suffused with olive brown, which is most dense on the tarsi. The forewing is narrow and lanceolate, and the ground color is olive-brown. There is a narrow white streak in the cubital fold from the base to four-fifths of wing length. The streak is continuous with the lateral stripe of the mesothorax when the wings are folded. The distal half of the wing is suffused with white in some specimens, and the cilia are olive-brown. The hindwing is dark brown above with a slight metallic reflection. The abdomen is uniformly beige above with an iridescent hue.

DISTRIBUTION: A series of adults were collected at or near Weymouth Wood Preserve in 1916, from which the species was described. It has not been seen since then.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adult were collected in May, and were very likely foraging on flowers.

HABITAT: The one collection site was in the Sandhills. Landry (1991) noted that this species is closely related to several undescribed species with similar patterning. All of these prefer sandy habitats and many are found on dunes.

FOOD: The hosts, if any, are unknown.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are active during the day, so direct searches of flowers or foliage is recommended.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SH

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

COMMENTS: This may be one of the rarest moths in North Carolina and North America. The species is only known from a single collection site from 1916, and has not been collected since then.