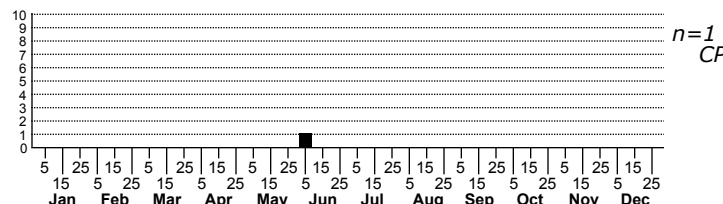
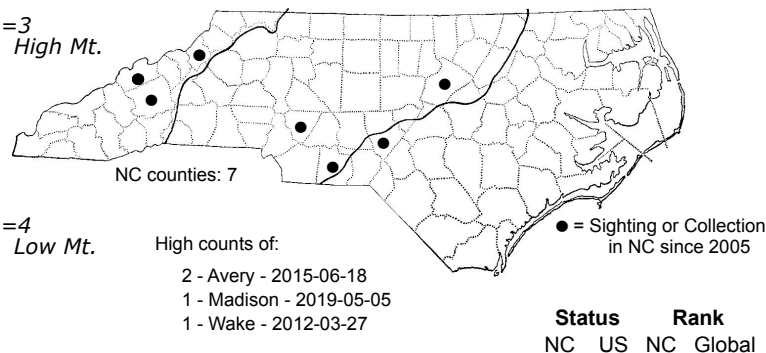
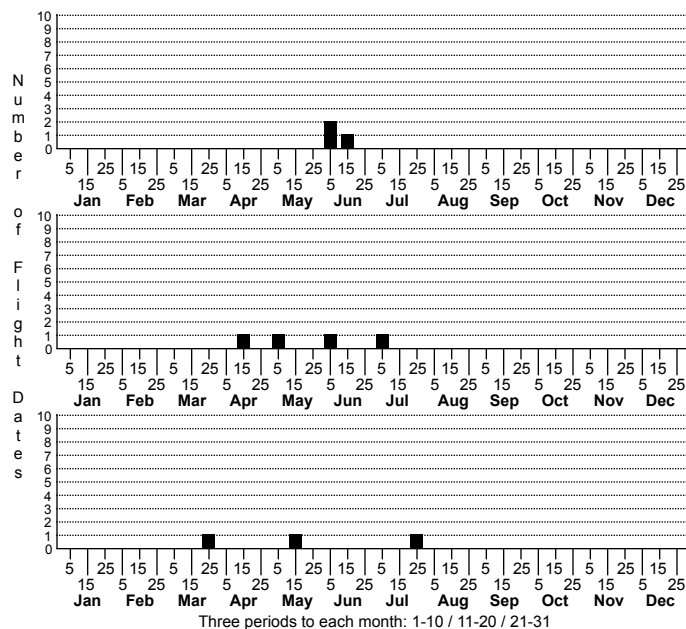


# *Agnippe prunifoliella* Skunk Twirler



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE:  
TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Chambers (1873); Forbes (1923)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based on those of Chambers (1873) and Forbes (1923). The head and thorax are white, with a blackish shade above the antenna. The antenna is dark grayish brown, and the tegula is black. The labial palp is white, with base of the second segment and extreme tip of the third blackish. The ground color of the forewing is black in the middle, and black with grayish speckling towards the costa. The subterminal region tends towards gray with blackish speckling. The inner margin has a broad, longitudinal, wavy white streak that extends from the base to the apex, with scattered black flecks that become more pronounced towards the apex. The streak is sometimes interrupted just before the apex to produce a separate white spot at the tornus. The streak has two conspicuous inward bulges, one at around one-third the wing length, and a wider one at two-thirds. A white, subterminal costal spot is present that is more or less distinct, and a matching spot is sometimes evident on the tornus. The hindwing and cilia are pale yellowish-brown to light grayish-brown. The legs are mostly black with white annulations. *Coleotechnites quercivorella* is similar and is most easily distinguished by its conspicuously banded labial palps.

DISTRIBUTION: *Agnippe prunifoliella* is widely distributed across North America, including the West Coast states, much of southern Canada (British Columbia to Prince Edward Island), and the eastern US. Populations in the eastern US range from Maine to Florida and westward to Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Michigan. Populations appear to be absent from much of the Atlantic Coastal Plain from Virginia to Georgia. As of 2023, our records are from the Piedmont to the higher elevations in the mountains, as well as a single record from the western coastal plain (Moore County).

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults can be found nearly year-round in Texas, and from March through September in other areas of the range outside of North Carolina. As of 2021, we have records from late March through mid-July.

HABITAT: The larvae feed on American Plum and probably on related species. American Plum prefers rich, mesic soils and is typically found in partially shaded habitats such as woodland borders, fencerows, and early successional habitats.

FOOD: The hosts are poorly documented, but this species seems to specialize on *Prunus* species. Eiseman (2022) lists American Plum (*Prunus americana*) and Peach (*P. persica*) as host plants, and Tracy Feldman reared a larva feeding on Chickasaw Plum (*P. angustifolia*).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights. More information is needed on host plant use and the larval life history.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be uncommon in the state, with only six site records through 2021.

March 2025

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft

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