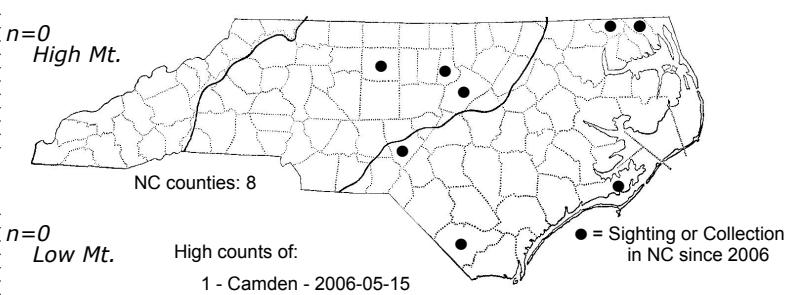
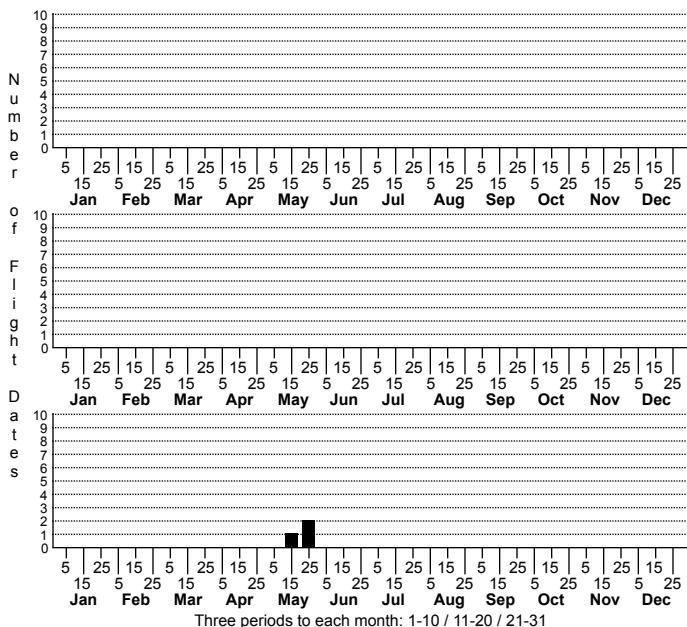


# Coleotechnites variella None



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE: Gelechiini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Coleotechnites* includes 49 very small species that occur in North America. Most species are specialists on conifers and tend to feed on a single genus of host plant. Many of the *Coleotechnites* species have almost identical genitalia that are not very useful in delineating closely related forms (Freeman, 1960; 1965). Freeman (1960) noted that host plants and the mining characteristics often provide the most reliable way to identify closely related species.

## FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

### ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1923, as *Recurvaria variella*)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: Despite substantial variation between individuals, this is a distinctively marked *Coleotechnites*. Note the white palp that lacks annulations, the four black spots along the base of the costal fringe, and the white angulated fascia in the PM region. The following description is based primarily on those of Chambers (1972, p. 187) and Forbes (1923). The head, antenna, and thorax are white. The labial palp is white and lacks annuli, and on some individuals the outer sides may have a slight yellowish cast. The forewing ground color is white, but becomes progressively overlain with golden yellow and fuscous dusting on the apical half. Individuals vary in the degree of dark dusting, which in turn can affect the overall patterning. A narrow line of dark dusting often occurs along the costal margin from the wing base to near one-half the wing length, where it meets a diffuse, curved golden brown bar that curves towards the middle. The bar extends posteriorly and often fuses with the terminus of a second, similar bar that begins on the costa at around three-fourths. In many specimens the region between the bars is completely filled with golden yellow and/or darker dusting and the bars are not evident. There are usually four conspicuous black spots at the base of the costal fringe that have whitish scales immediately in front. An outwardly angulated white fascia is usually present (sometimes incomplete) that begins on the costa just before the anteriomost spot. It projects posteriorly before sharply angling anteriorly to the dorsal margin. The other conspicuous mark is a black scale tuft that is located along the fold about three-fourths the wing length. It often has a few raised whitish scales associated with it.

DISTRIBUTION: *Coleotechnites variella* is found in the eastern US from the Washington, D.C. area southward to Florida, then westward along the Gulf Coast states to eastern Texas and Oklahoma. The range extends northward up the Mississippi Valley to southern Illinois, with a few scattered in Indiana, southwestern Ohio, and Kentucky. As of 2021, we have records only from the northeast corner of the Coastal Plain and the eastern Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly during May and June in areas outside of North Carolina. As of 2021, All of our records are from May.

HABITAT: Our records all come from cypress-containing habitats. Bald Cypress is often planted as an ornamental, so the range may be expanding to some extent.

FOOD: This species is a specialist on Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and probably also on Pond Cypress (*T. ascendens*; Forbes, 1923; Robinson et al., 2010).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults appear to occasionally visit lights. More information is needed on the larval ecology and life history, so we encourage naturalists to search for the larvae on *Taxodium*.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S2S4

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

COMMENTS: Although cypress swamps and savannas have been well-surveyed in North Carolina for macro-moths, the micro-moths associated with these habitats are still too poorly known to estimate their conservation status.