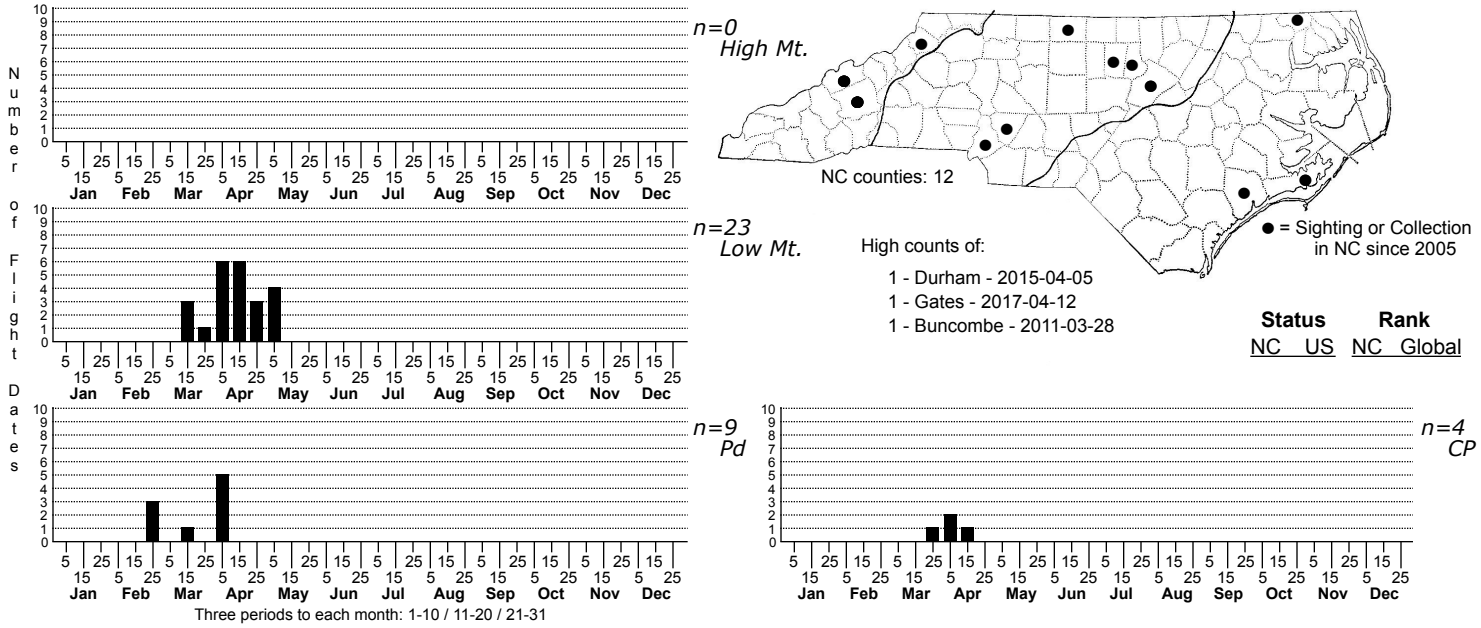
Telphusa longifasciella Y-backed Telphusa



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE:
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012); Leckie and Beadle (2018)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1923)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This small moth has a dark purplish ground color and a distinctive whitish, Y-pattern when a resting moth is viewed from above. The following description is primarily based on that of Forbes (1923). The head is white and the antenna is annulated with white and purplish-brown. The labial palp is mostly purplish to purplish-brown. The second segment has an apical white annulus, and the third segment a white basal and subapical annulus. The thorax and ground color of the forewing is rich dark purple. The forewing has a conspicuous white fascia that begins near the base of the costa, runs obliquely across to the inner margin, then meets a longitudinal streak that runs along the inner margin almost to the apex. It is often constricted or interrupted at the anal angle and may appear dirty white or have a faint yellowish brown dusting. The cilia are whitish, and the hindwing and fringe are pale grayish.

DISTRIBUTION: Telphusa longifasciella is found in eastern North America from the New England states and adjoining areas of southern Canada (Manitoba; Ontario; Quebec; New Brunswick) southward to the Florida Panhandle and westward to eastern Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Wisconsin. There are a few records from out West in British Columbia, Washington, and Utah. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from January through August in areas from outside of North Carolina, with a strong seasonal peak in April and May. As of 2021, our records extend from late February through early May. Populations in North Carolina are univoltine, with breeding occurring mostly from mid-March to early May.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats and hosts are poorly documented. Most of our records are from semi-wooded residential neighborhoods.

FOOD: The larvae have been recorded on Staghorn Sumac (Rhus typhina; Lee and Brown, 2008; Robinson et al., 2010), but other hosts are undoubtedly used given that the adults have been collected far from the range of this host species.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights. The hosts are poorly documented, so information on the larval life history would be of value.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S4S5

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 secure in North Carolina.