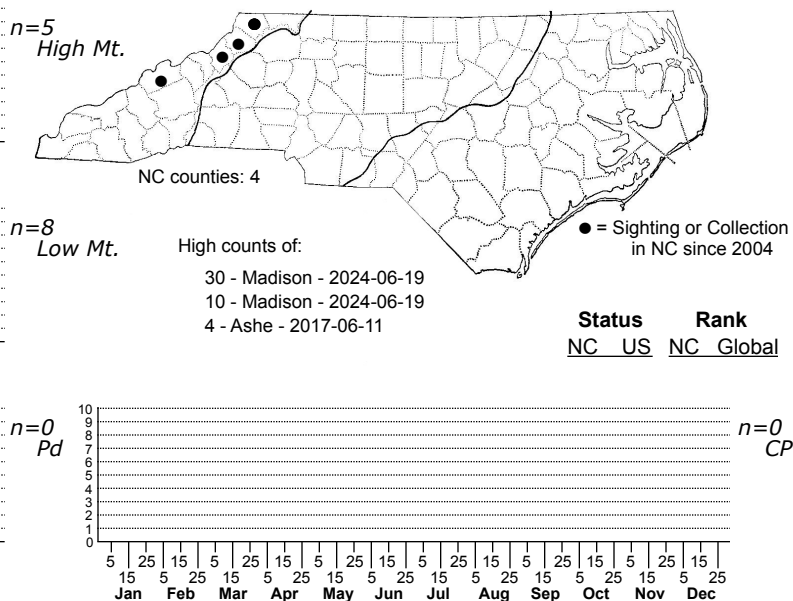
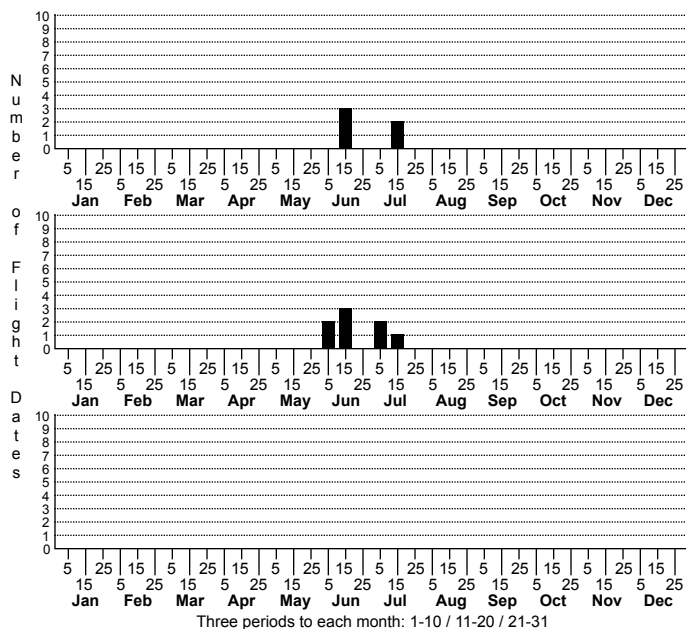


Chionodes pseudofondella No common name



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE: Gelechiini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Chionodes* is the most species rich genus of gelechiid moths in the Western Hemisphere, with 187 recognized species. Our knowledge of the diverse array of species in North America is largely due to the monumental work of Hodges (1999), who spend decades working on the group and described 115 new species (Powell and Opler, 2009). Many exhibit substantial variation within species and have drab coloration, typically with brown, dark gray, or blackish patterning on the forewings. These can only be confidently identified by examining secondary sexual characteristics and/or the genitalia of one or both sexes. Others are more boldly marked and can be identified by wing patterning. Many of our state records are based on Hodges (1999) database of over 19,000 specimens that he examined from major collections in the US. These include North Carolina specimens that he collected mostly from Highlands, and from a few other areas within the state.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hodges (1999)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Chionodes pseudofondella* is very similar to *C. fondella* in terms of the intense black marks on the forewing. The following detailed description is based mostly on that of Hodges (1999). The vertex, thorax, and ground color of the forewing are pale yellowish white to ashy gray and overlain with dark gray to blackish dusting. The antenna is pale with thin, darker annulations. The recurved labial palp is pale gray to off-white and extends nearly to the thorax. The second segment is nearly white and lacks numerous dark-gray tipped scales laterally. The third segment is mainly off-white with many dark-gray to brown tipped scales laterally. There are two conspicuous black marks. The first is a broad, oblique band that begins on the costa at about one-third the wing length and extends posteriorly nearly to the dorsal margin. The second is an irregularly shaped band at about two-thirds that extends nearly to the inner margin. A prominent black spot is present between the two. The apical third of the wing is heavily dusted with blackish scales and usually organized as a diffuse blackish blotch. A pair of whitish costal and dorsal spots at four-fifths separate the two. Heavy dark dusting or spotting is also usually evident at the extreme wing base, where it often forms a diffuse blotch or small spots. The hindwing and cilia are light grayish brown. The dorsal surface of the abdomen has dark and medium gray mottling, and the legs are dark gray brown to blackish, with pale to off-white annulations. *Chionodes fondella* is similar, but the second black mark on the forewing has a broad line that extends forward almost to the first black band. In addition, the second segment of the labial palp has numerous dark-gray tipped scales versus being mostly white in *C. pseudofondella*.

DISTRIBUTION: *Chionodes pseudofondella* is primarily found in the east-central US, but there are also records for British Columbia and Ontario. The range in the US extends from New Hampshire and Massachusetts westward to Iowa and Nebraska, and southward to Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Mississippi. As of 2021, all of our records are from middle-elevation sites in the mountains. Hodges (1999) reported a series of specimens from Guilford County (2 June-27 July, mainly June). We are unaware of the source of these records or the location of the specimens, and have not included these in our database.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Local populations appear to be univoltine. Adult records are almost all from May through September in regions outside of North Carolina, with a strong seasonal peak in June. As of 2021, our records are from early June through early July.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats are poorly documented. The larvae appear to feed on herbaceous vegetation, but much more information is needed on the host plants. Our records are from a forest-bog complex, a grassy bald, and other sites that have a mixture of forest and more open habitats that support herbs.

FOOD: The larvae appear to be polyphagous. Hodges (1999) reported that the adults have been reared from larvae feeding on flowers of *Oregano* (*Origanum vulgare*), and on Savanna Mountain-mint (*Pycnanthemum flexuosum*) and Hyssopleaf Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium hyssopifolium*). None of these species are found at sites where we have collected the species, and other natives are likely used such as mountain-mints.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults come to lights.

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 and possibly restricted to the middle to higher elevations in the mountains. More information is needed on the distribution and abundance of this species before we can assess its conservation status.