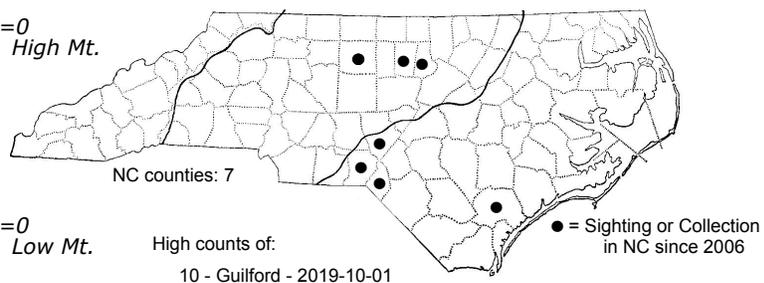
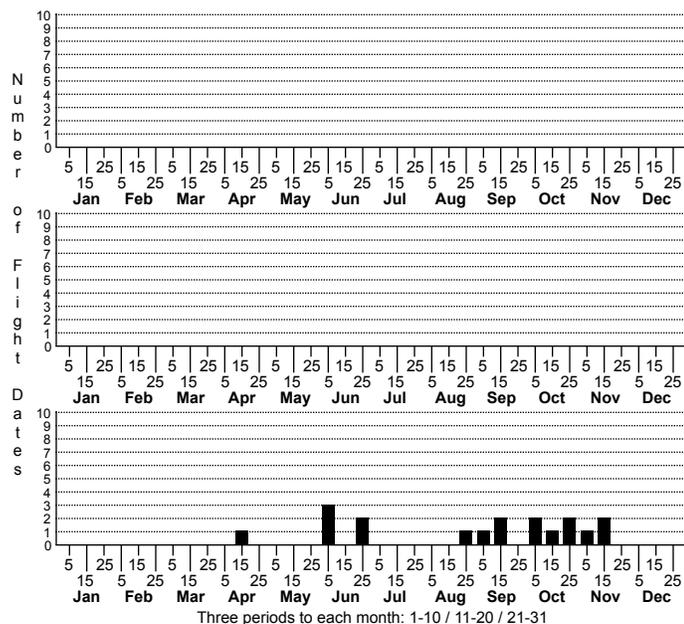
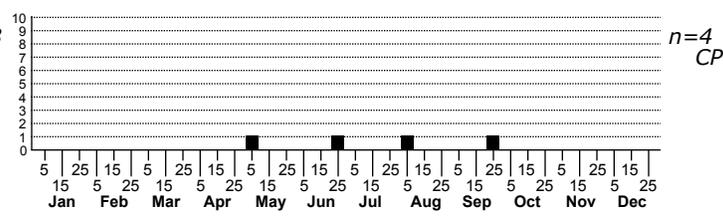


Mesophleps adustipennis Soybean Webworm Moth



High counts of:
 10 - Guilford - 2019-10-01
 10 - Guilford - 2019-10-11
 10 - Guilford - 2019-10-21

Status	Rank
NC	US
NC	Global



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Anacampsinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: The genus *Mesophleps* contains over 50 species, with all but *Mesophleps adustipennis* occurring in the Old World. It is currently treated by experts as being native to the New World.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Walsingham (1897)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Passoa et al. (2022)

ID COMMENTS: *Mesophleps adustipennis* is a small, light yellowish-brown moth with strongly recurved, reddish-brown palps, a series of three elongated spots on the forewing, and a dark-brown band along the costa from the middle of the forewing to near the apex. The following detailed description is based in part on that of Walsingham (1897) who described specimens from the West Indies.

In this species the second segment of the labial palp is thick and covered with reddish-brown scales, except for the terminal end of the fringe that has pale scales. The third segment is smooth and light yellowish-brown. The antenna is light yellowish-brown and faintly annulated with darker rings. The head, thorax and ground color of the forewing are all light yellowish- or reddish-brown, with the costa having a dark-brown edge that begins at or just before the middle of the forewing and terminates just before the apex. Specimens typically have three small, elongated, dark spots that are margined with pale scales. The first is on the middle of the fold at around one-third the wing length from the base, the third is at the end of the cell at around three fourths, and the second is equidistant between these two and also on the cell. The fringe is a shade lighter than the ground color, and a line of three or four faint dark spots is often evident along the outer margin. The hindwing and fringe are gray, and the legs dark-brown to yellowish-brown when viewed from above.

DISTRIBUTION: *Mesophleps adustipennis* has tropical and subtropical affinities. It is found in the western and southern parts of the United States, and in Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, the West Indies, Venezuela, Ecuador (Galapagos Islands), Peru and Brazil (Li and Sattler, 2012; Wikipedia). In the US it occurs in southern and central California, and in the Southeast from southern Texas northward to northeastern Oklahoma, then eastward through the Gulf Coast states and western Tennessee to Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina. The range continues north along the Atlantic Seaboard to Virginia, Maryland and southern New Jersey. This species is absent from the Appalachian region. As of 2025, our records are from the eastern Piedmont, the Sandhills and a barrier island off of the southern coast.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly year-round in Florida, and mostly from May through December elsewhere. As of 2025, our records are from mid-April through mid-November, with local populations in North Carolina appearing to produce at least two broods per year.

HABITAT: Our records include xeric communities in the Sandhills, and both deciduous forests and disturbed, residential neighborhoods in the Piedmont.

FOOD: The larvae feed on a variety of tropical and subtropical legumes (Heppner 2007, 2013; Passoa et al. 2022). These include one or more species of *Bauhinia*, *Caesalpinia*, *Cajanus*, *Crotalaria*, *Glycine*, *Leucaena*, *Mimosa*, *Parkinsonia*, *Prosopis*, *Tephrosia* and *Vachellia*. As of 2025, we are unaware of any documentation of the native hosts that are used in the US.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S3S4]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: