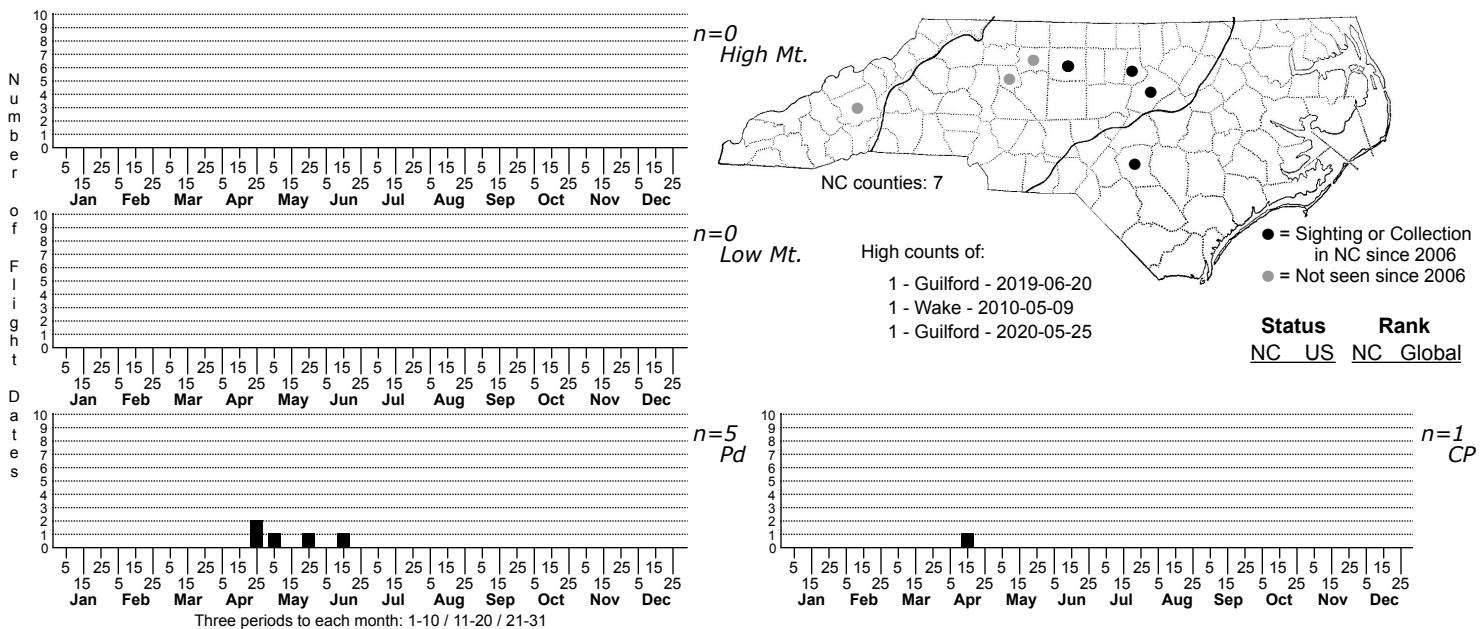


## Dichomeris marginella Juniper Webworm Moth



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Dichomeridinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Dichomeris* is a large genus with several hundred species that occur throughout the world. Hedges (1986) recognized 74 species in North America north of Mexico, with 19 species groups. Most are leaf tiers and they use a taxonomically diverse array of plant hosts, including members of 18 families of plants in North America. As of 2025, North Carolina has 35 documented species, and at least one undescribed species from the Sandhills.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hedges (1986)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Dichomeris marginella* is easily identified by the boldly-marked forewings, with each having a white, longitudinal band on the anterior and posterior margins that are separated by a broad brown band. The thorax and head are white, while the first two segments of the labial palps are light brown along the sides and whitish above, with a well-developed scale tuft. The third segment is mainly white or yellowish-white with light-brown scales on the anterior surface and towards the apex (Hedges, 1986).

DISTRIBUTION: *Dichomeris marginella* is found in eastern North America in southern Canada (Ontario; Quebec; Nova Scotia) and in the US from Maine and New Hampshire southward to South Carolina and Georgia, and westward to eastern Tennessee, Missouri, western Virginia, central Kentucky, eastern Pennsylvania, northeastern Ohio and Michigan. Hedges (1986) noted that this species was introduced into California in the 1920's and is now present in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. As of 2025, we have records from all three physiographic provinces, but with recent records only from the eastern Piedmont and an adjoining area in the western Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults in the eastern US typically fly from May through July. As of 2025, our records range from mid-April to mid-June.

HABITAT: The larvae specialize on junipers and local populations are strongly associated with sites that have the host plants. They occur in natural communities with cedars (see General Cedar Woodlands above), and also in urban environments and nurseries where ornamental junipers are grown.

FOOD: The larvae are specialists on junipers, including both native and ornamental species (Forbes, 1923; Craighead et al., 1950; Maier et al., 2004; Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2010; Eiseman, 2022). The native hosts in the eastern US include Common Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and Eastern Red Cedar (*J. virginiana*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the webbed nests can be found on Eastern Red Cedar and other junipers.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNA SNR [SNA] GNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: