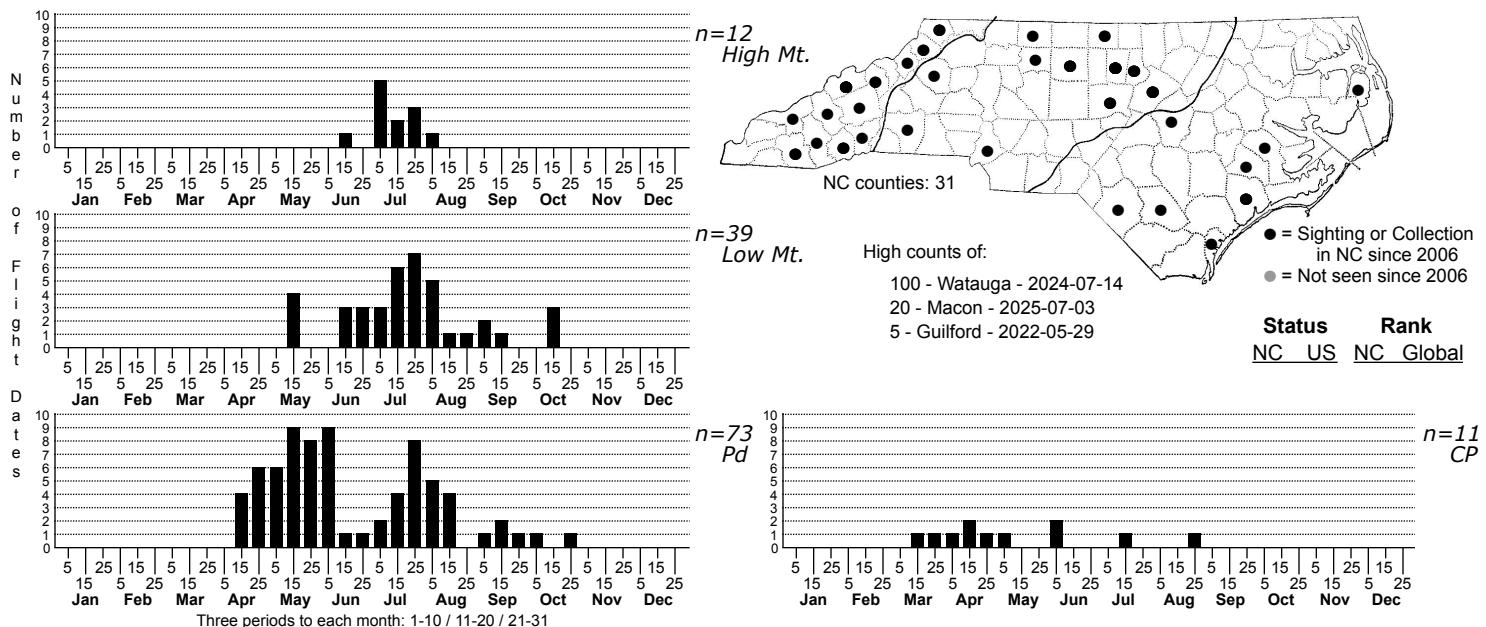


# Dichomeris punctipennella Many-spotted Dichomeris



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:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hedges (1986)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Dichomeris punctipennella* has an arrowhead shape due to its elongated and pointed forewings and labial palps that project forward. The forewing is often mottled with a mixture of light ochreous-yellow and darker grayish-brown scales, and there are several diffuse, dark spots on the thorax and wing. These include three posteriorly-oblique, parallel pairs of spots that are roughly equidistant and found in the antemedial, medial, and postmedial regions of the wing. A series of fine spots is present along the costa, outer margin, and inner margin on the terminal third of the wing. The head and thorax are more-or-less unicolorous with the forewing, and there are three dark spots on the distal end of the thorax. The labial palps project forward and are dark-brown externally with a strong dorsal scale tuft that is less-developed on the female. The shaft of the antenna has a notch on the dorsal surface of segments two and three, and is marked with alternating dark-brown and ochreous-yellow bands (Forbes, 1923; Hedges, 1986). The hindwing is pale brownish-gray.

DISTRIBUTION: *Dichomeris punctipennella* is broadly distributed across much of the eastern US and southern Canada where it occurs in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. The range in the US extends from Maine southward to southern Florida and westward to central Texas, then northward to Minnesota. Populations are generally uncommon west of the Mississippi River in the central and northern US. As of 2025, we have records from all three physiographic provinces, with numerous records from the Blue Ridge and Piedmont, and relatively few from the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly year-round or nearly so in Florida, Alabama and other areas in the southernmost portion of the range. Farther north the main flight period is commonly from May through September. As of 2025, our records extend from mid-March through late-October. Populations in the Piedmont appear to have two or more broods per year, while those in the high mountains appear to produce only one.

HABITAT: Local populations are associated with hardwood forests or sites where hardwoods are present. These include mesic hardwood slopes, bottomland forests, semi-wooded residential neighborhoods, and dry ridges.

FOOD: The host plants are poorly documented. Charley Eiseman has a BugGuide record for a larva on Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) in Massachusetts.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S5]

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

COMMENTS:  
March 2026

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft