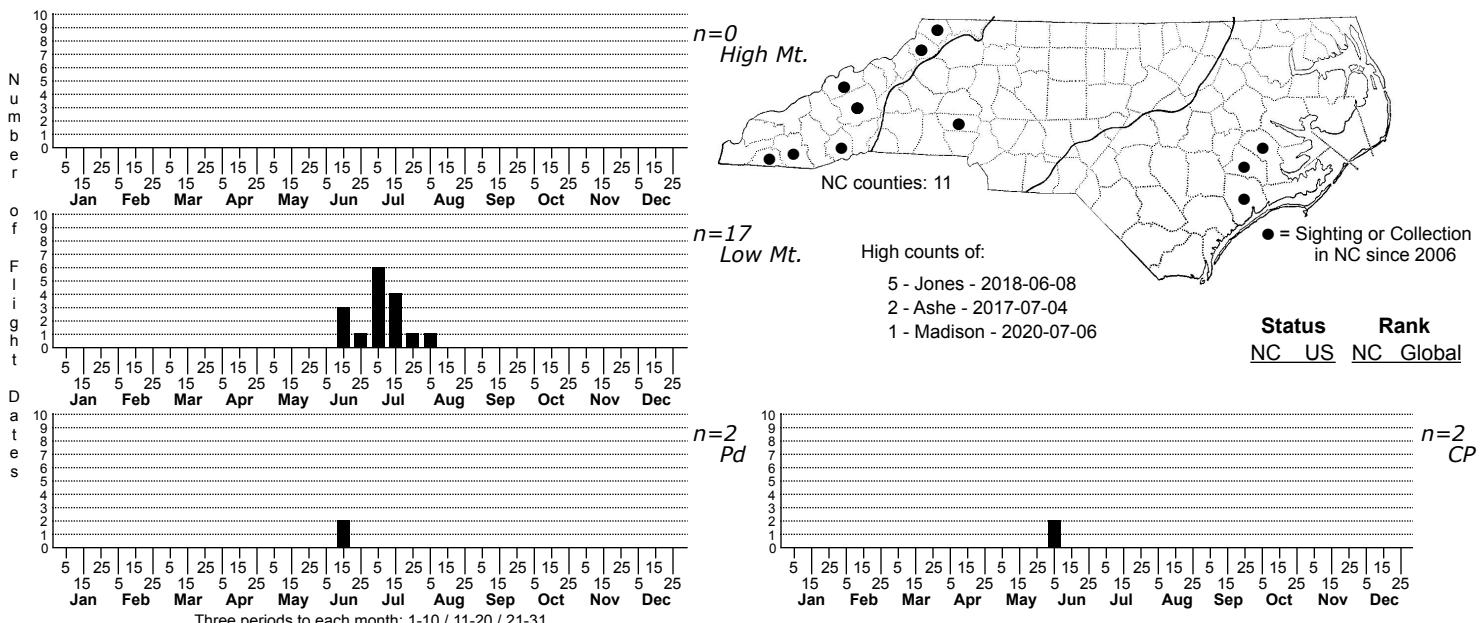


Dichomeris ochripalpella Shining Dichomeris



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Dichomeridinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: <i>Dichomeris</i> is a large genus with several hundred species that occur throughout the world. Hodges (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: Hodges (1986)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Loeffler (1994)

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctive and easily recognizable species with bright orange labial palps. The forewing has bands of metallic silvery-blue scales that are intermixed with larger, intense brown blotches. Orangish scales are often scattered within the dark marks, and are organized to form a costal spot at three-fourths the length on the costal margin (Hodges, 1986). A longitudinal band of silvery-blue scales occur along the costal margin from the wing base to three-fourths the wing length where it terminates at the orange spot. There is also a band of silver-blue scales on the fold at three-fourths the length of the fold, and in the subterminal region. Three large, dark-brown blotches fill up the remainder of the wing: one along the inner margin on the basal half, a second near the middle of the wing at three-fourths, and the last in the subterminal area. The outer margin has a line of dark-brown scales and the adjoining fringe has a mixture of orangish and brown scale patches.

DISTRIBUTION: <i>Dichomeris ochripalpella</i> is found in eastern North America, including southeastern Canada (Ontario; Quebec; New Brunswick; Newfoundland) and much of the eastern US. The range in the US extends from Maine westward through the Great Lakes region to Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota, and southward to eastern Texas, southern Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. This species appears to be uncommon in the southeastern Coastal Plain and in areas outside of the southern Appalachians. We have records from all three physiographic provinces, with the great majority from the Blue Ridge. Records from coastal habitats in the Croatan National Forest and vicinity may represent a disjunct group from those in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been documented from May through October in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak in June and July. As of 2025, our records extend from early-June through early-August, with a seasonal peak in July.

HABITAT: Loeffler (1994) reared adults from larvae that were found in forests, small and large fields, and woodland openings and noted that the larvae were evenly distributed among these habitats. Larvae were also found on plants in gravel bars along streams, which may have been a potentially important goldenrod habitat before European colonization.

FOOD: Loeffler (1994) conducted a comprehensive study of host use by this and other <i>Dichomeris</i> species in the Northeast that use goldenrods and asters and documented the following hosts: White Wood-aster (<i>Eurybia divaricata</i>), Tall Goldenrod (<i>Solidago altissima</i>), White Goldenrod (<i>S. bicolor</i>), Bluestem Goldenrod (<i>S. caesia</i>), Zigzag Goldenrod (<i>S. flexicaulis</i>), Giant Goldenrod (<i>S. gigantea</i>), Early Goldenrod (<i>S. juncea</i>), Northern Roughleaf Goldenrod (<i>S. patula</i>), Wrinkle-leaf Goldenrod (<i>S. rugosa</i>), Heartleaf Aster (<i>Symphyotrichum cordifolium</i>), White Panicle Aster (<i>S. lanceolatum</i>), Calico Aster (<i>S. lateriflorum</i>), New England Aster (<i>S. novae-angliae</i>), Crooked-stem Aster (<i>S. prenanthoides</i>) and Wavyleaf Aster (<i>S. undulatum</i>).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found in leaf folds on goldenrods and asters in late-summer.

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:

March 2026

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft