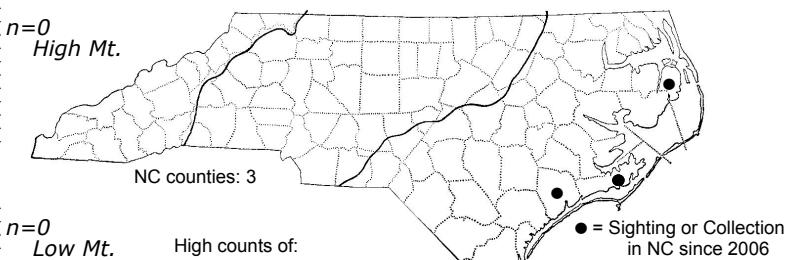
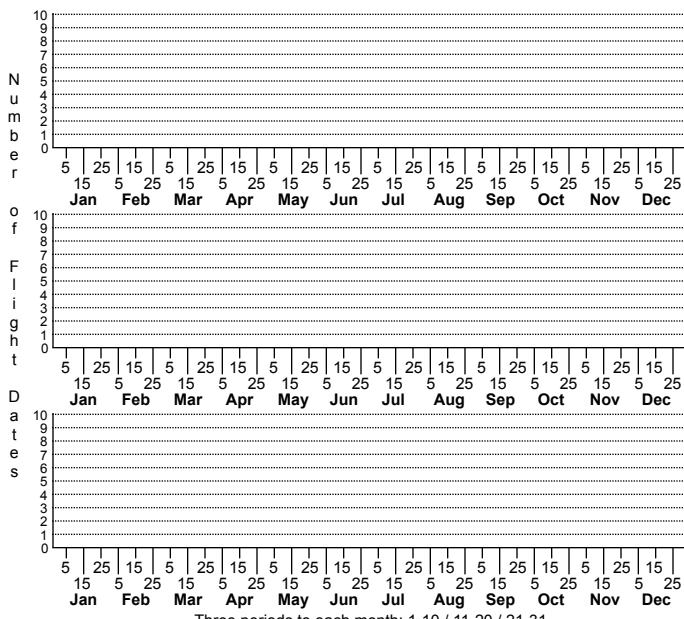


Dichomeris pelta None



Status	Rank		
NC	US	NC	Global

n=10
CP

FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Dichomeridinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Dichomeris* 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:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hodges (1986)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Dichomeris pelta* has a two-toned appearance with the forewing having a yellowish costal band that extends from the wing base to the apex, and an adjoining broad, toothed, dark-brown band that extends from the base to the outer margin. The yellowish band is widest near the middle and gently narrows towards both the apex and the base where there is a small dark-brown subcostal spot. The dark band commonly has two small teeth that project into the yellow band; one at around two-fifths the wing length, and the second at around two-thirds the wing length.

The outer surface of the first and second segments of the labial palp are dark brown and the second segment has strong dorsal scale tuft that is pale yellow. The third segment is pale yellow basally that grades into dingy brown and yellow at the apex (Hodges, 1986). The vertex and occiput are pale yellowish white above the eyes and grayish-brown medially, while the meso- and metathorax are mainly brown with some pale-yellow scales. The antenna is pale yellow on the scape and first two or three segments of the shaft, with the remainder of the shaft being dark-gray to grayish-brown.

Dichomeris pelta can be confused with two other *Dichomeris* that are found in coastal areas (the dark morph of *D. ligulella* and *D. bolize*). *Dichomeris bolize* and *D. pelta* have a yellowish to cream-colored, longitudinal band along the costa that lacks the scattered dark flecking that is typically present in *D. ligulella*. In *D. bolize*, the light costal band terminates just before reaching the apex, while in *D. pelta* the band terminates at the apex, as is the case with *D. ligulella*. *Dichomeris pelta* also has a small black spot in the yellow band near the base of the forewing that the other two species lack. Both of these species lack the prominent, forward-projecting, scale tufts on the labial palps that are typical of *D. ligulella*. Worn specimens of all three can be distinguished using genitalia.

DISTRIBUTION: *Dichomeris pelta* is endemic to the southeastern Coastal Plain. As of 2025, it has been found throughout much of Florida and in coastal habitats in southeastern Mississippi, southwestern Alabama, central South Carolina and central North Carolina. As of 2025, we have records from Dare County southward to Onslow County.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adult have been found in most months of the year in Florida, except during the hottest summer months, and from April through June in Mississippi, Alabama and South Carolina. As of 2025, our records suggest that two broods may be produced in North Carolina, with adults first on the wing between mid-April through late-May, and again from early-August through late-September.

HABITAT: The adults have been taken near coastal wetland habitats and coastal scrub habitats in North Carolina.

FOOD: As of 2025, we are unaware of any host plants that have been reported.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S2S3]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS:

March 2026

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft