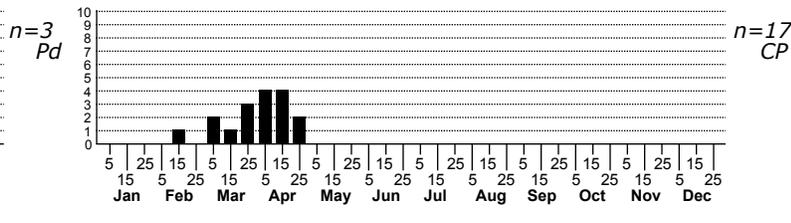
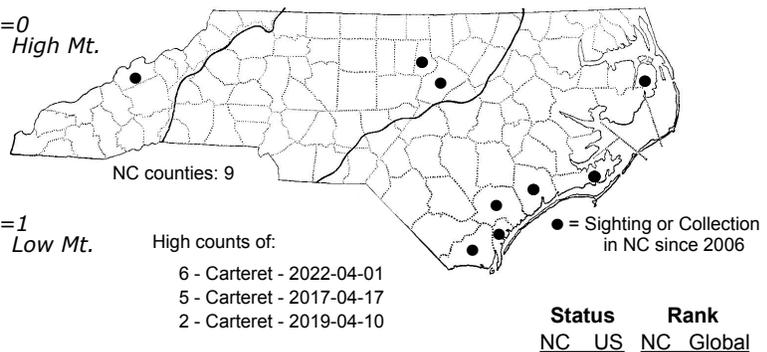
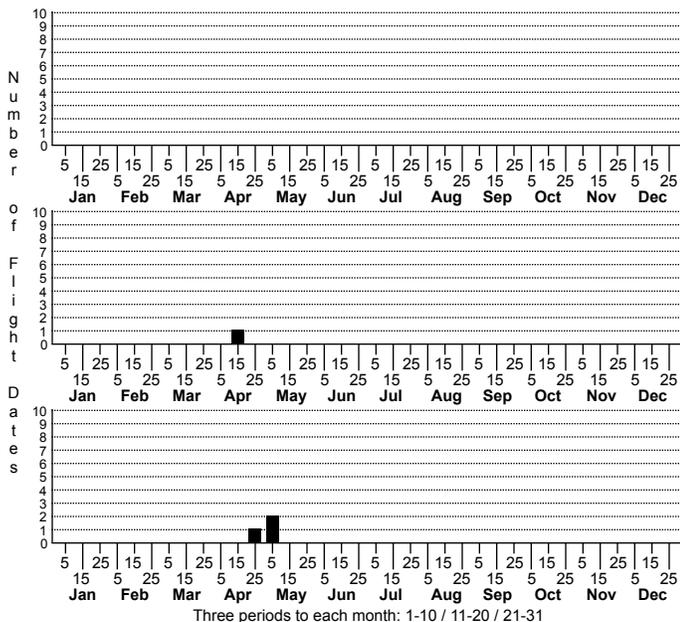


Argyresthia alternatella Juniper Seed Moth



FAMILY: *Argyresthiidae* SUBFAMILY: TRIBE:
 TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Kearfott (1908a)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Marcovitch (1915)

ID COMMENTS: *Argyresthia alternatella* is a small, golden-brown moth with a distinctive reticulated pattern on the forewing. The following is based mostly on that of Kearfott (1908a), who described the species using specimens from two sites in New Jersey. The head and vertex are white above, while the labial palps are golden-colored. The antenna is dark golden-fuscous with lighter annulations. The thorax and forewing ground color are concolorous and typically a medium to light golden-brown. The forewing ground in overlain with a reticulated pattern of dark-brown bands on the costal two-thirds of the wing. Some specimens have five or fewer rather faint dark-brown spots where the bands strike the costa, while the inner margin has three more prominent dark spots. These include an elongated mark at the base, and two triangular-shaped or squarish marks at around one-fifth and two-fifths the wing length. A less-prominent fourth spot is sometimes present at around four-fifths. The terminal fringe is concolorous with the forewing ground, and the hindwing is light smoky-brown with a prominent brownish fringe. The legs can be various shades of ochreous-brown and lack lighter annulations.

DISTRIBUTION: *Argyresthia alternatella* is found primarily in the eastern two-thirds of the US and in southern Ontario and Quebec. The range in the US extends from the New England states southwestward to North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, and westward to Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota. Specimens have also been observed farther west in California and British Columbia. As of 2025, we have records from all three physiographic regions, with the great majority from areas along the coast where junipers are present.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been documented from January through August in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak typically in April through June. This species is an early-season flier in North Carolina. As of 2025, our records range from mid-February to early-May.

HABITAT: Our records come from both barrier islands and other tidewater areas where Southern Red Cedar is common, as well as inland sites where Eastern Red Cedar is the presumed host plant.

FOOD: Larvae feed on Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) in the eastern US (Forbes, 1923; Beadle and Leckie, 2018). They also feed on Western Juniper (*J. occidentalis*) in northern California (Dimitri et al., 2018). Populations along the coast likely use Southern Red Cedar (*J. silicicola*), which is often treated by authorities as a subspecies of *J. virginiana*. As of 2025, we do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights, and the larvae can be found feeding on the fruits of Eastern Red Cedar.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR [S2S4]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: Populations in North Carolina are spottily distributed due to the sole reliance of larvae on *Juniperus* as the host plant.