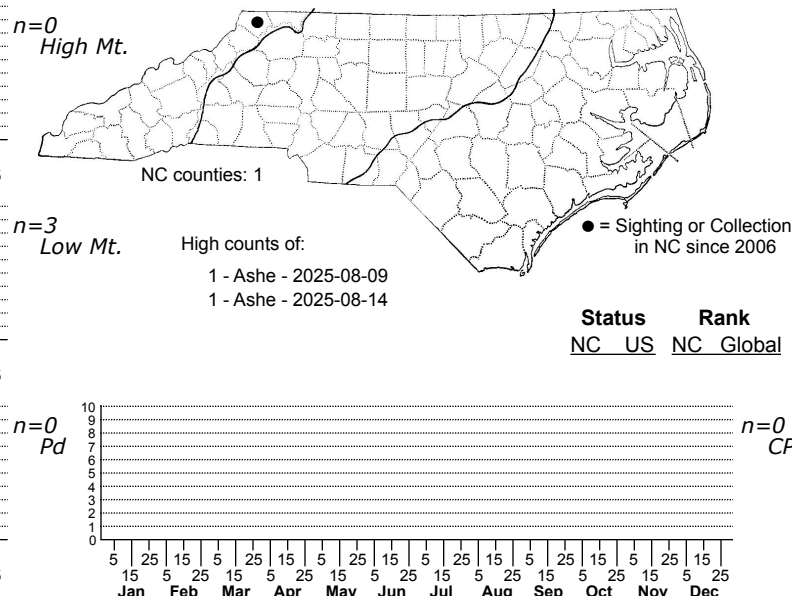
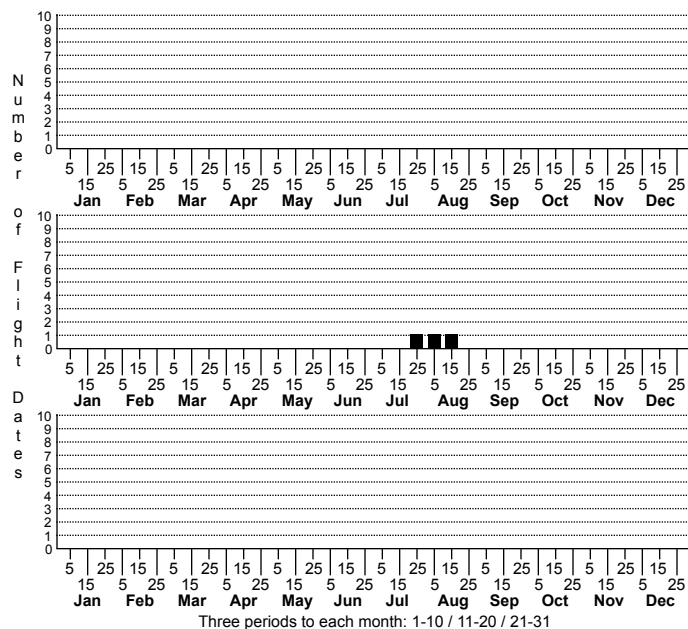


Albuna fraxini Virginia Creeper Clearwing



FAMILY: Sesiidae SUBFAMILY: Tinthiinae TRIBE: Paranthrenini

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: North America has 136 or more species in the family Sesiidae, with 37 species found in North Carolina. Many being similar in appearance to one another. Some are significant pests of commercial crops, and almost all are mimics of wasps and hornets.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Engelhardt (1946)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctive species, with the males having prominent black tufts on the forelegs, a reddish discal bar that is preceded by a prominent black blotch, and a conspicuous, flared anal tuft. Females have a more robust body and a simple antenna that is more boldly contrasting with black and yellow. The labial palps are entirely black and the anal tuft is short and blunt. The forewing is almost entirely opaque and the discal mark more conspicuously red than in the male. The following detailed description of the male is based primarily on that of Engelhardt (1946).

The bipectinate antenna is pale yellow to whitish and shaded with black on the basal half and tip. The labial palp is pale yellow at the base and black along the sides and toward the tip. The head is black, and the collar black with a whitish patch at the sides. The thorax is black, with the tegulae violaceous, and with a narrow pale-yellow strip at the sides that extends from the wing base to the collar. The metathorax is fringed with white at the sides and below, while the abdomen is entirely black. The anal tuft is black and broadly fan-shaped. The forewing is hyaline except for heavy blackish scaling on the terminal fourth, along the veins and margins, and as an oval, black spot just anterior to the orangish or reddish discal spot. The hindwing is mostly hyaline with brownish-black in a narrow band along the wing margins, on the discal spot, and along the veins and fringe.

DISTRIBUTION: *Albuna fraxini* has northern affinities and occurs in a broad swath from southern Quebec and the New England states southward to Pennsylvania and northern Virginia, then westward through Ohio, Indiana and Illinois to northern Colorado, central Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, eastern North Dakota and southern Manitoba. As of 2024, we have a single record from Ashe County in the northern Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from June through September in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak in July. As of 2024, our one state record is from 28 July.

HABITAT: Local populations are found where Virginia Creeper is present, and typically in mesic forests or forest edge habitats.

FOOD: Larvae are borers in Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) (Eichlin and Duckworth, 1988).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are diurnally active and are often found resting on vegetation during the day or nectaring on wildflowers. They are not attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S1S2]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This species appears to be very rare within the state and disjunct from the main range farther north.