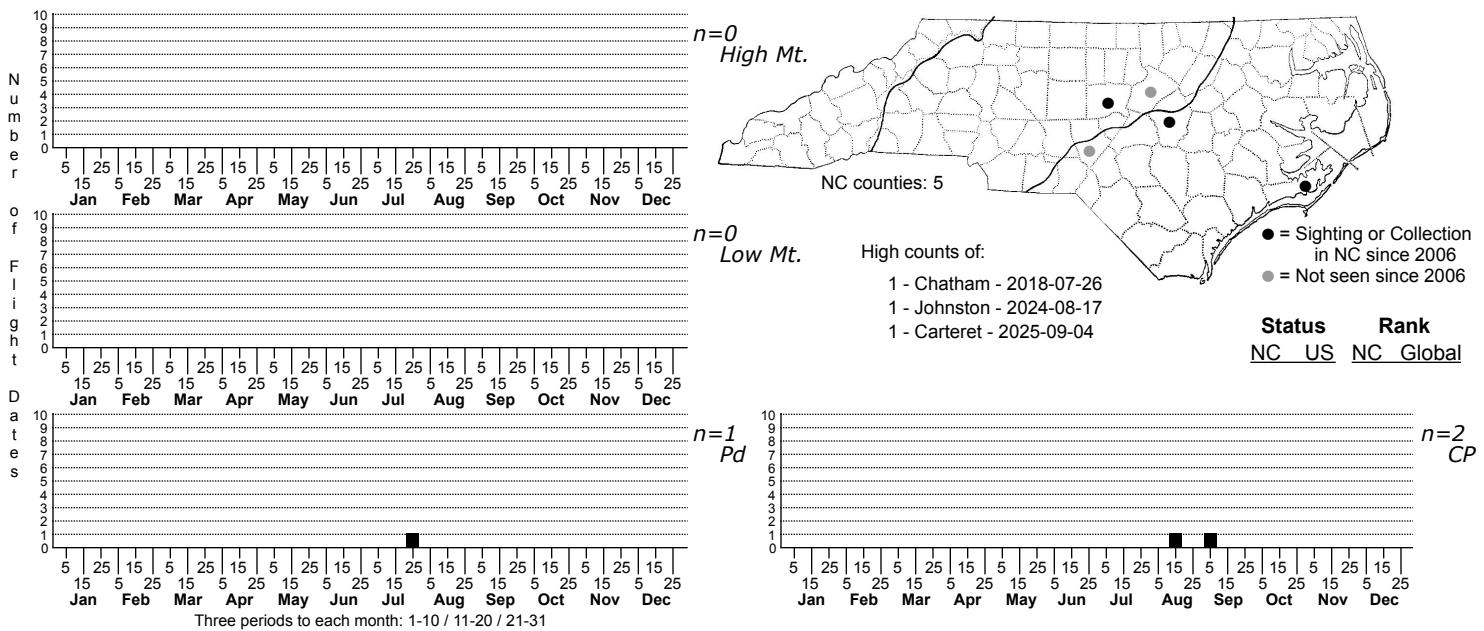


# *Osminia ruficornis* Minute Clearwing



FAMILY: Sesiidae SUBFAMILY: Sesiinae TRIBE: Osminiini

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: Eichlin and Duckworth (1988)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Osminia ruficornis* is best identified by its very small size and shiny black to brownish-black abdomen with segments 2, 4, 6 and 7 banded with yellow on the male. The following description of the male is based primarily on that of Eichlin and Duckworth (1988).

The vertex of the head is roughened and has a mixture of brownish-black and yellow scales. The occipital fringe (collar) is yellow dorsally and white laterally, while the front is grayish-black with white laterally. The antenna is bluish-black dorsally and pale orange below, while the labial palp is yellow with some black dorsally. The thorax is brownish-black, with a yellow region that surrounds the base of the forewing. The tibiae and tarsi of the legs are ringed with brownish-black and yellow bands. The forewing is mostly opaque and brownish-black, with varying amount of deep orange dusting basally, in the cell, and just beyond the discal spot. A small hyaline streak is also often evident in the cell and just beyond the discal spot. The hindwing is hyaline except for blackish scales on the wing margins, veins and fringe. The abdomen is blackish with a yellow band on segments 2, 4, 6 and 7. Females are similar to the males but have one less abdominal band near the tip of the abdomen.

DISTRIBUTION: *Osminia ruficornis* has been found at scattered localities in the southeastern US and as disjuncts in southeastern Arizona, extreme southern Texas and portions of Mexico. The range in the eastern US extends from Virginia southward to central Florida and westward to Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri and northern Kentucky. As of 2024, we have two recent records from Chatham and Johnston counties, as well as two historical records from two adjoining counties.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from July through October in the eastern US, with a seasonal peak commonly in August. As of 2024, our two dated records are from late-July and mid-August.

HABITAT: The habitats are poorly documented, but this species appears to favor open or fragmented habitats.

FOOD: The host plants are apparently undocumented, but larvae are suspected of feeding on milkpeas (*Galactia* spp.) (Bill Taft, pers. comm. to JBS, 2023-03).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are diurnally active and only rarely visit lights. They are typically seen resting on vegetation or nectaring on flowers during the day.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR[S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be rare or uncommon throughout its range. As of 2024, we have only two recent records for North Carolina.

March 2026

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft