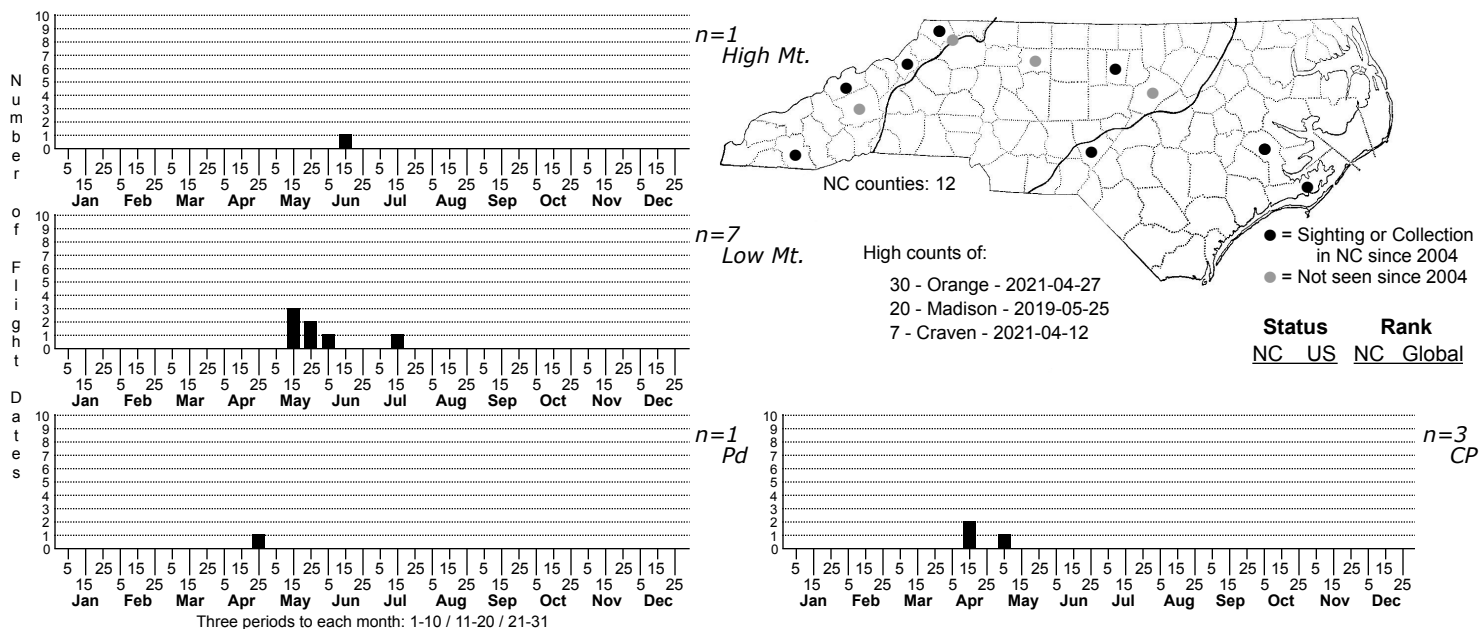


Podosesia syringae Ash Borer Moth



FAMILY: Sesiidae SUBFAMILY: Sesiinae TRIBE: Synanthedonini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *P. syringae* is one of two species of *Podosesia* found in the state, both of which utilize ashes (*Fraxinus* spp.) as a food plant. The taxonomy of several groups in this family remains vexing, with some species undoubtedly complexes of several, as-yet undifferentiated species.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2018)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Eichlin and Duckworth (1988)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: Sexes similar. Thorax brownish-black with red scales scattered above base of wings and immediately adjacent to abdomen. Abdomen brownish-black, constricted at the base, more so in males (Eichlin & Duckworth, 1988). In form that occurs in NC, segments 2-4 variably brownish-black or reddish. Anal tuft brownish-black, pointed. Forewing brownish-black, opaque but for a small hyaline area at base, red on basal margins. Hindwing hyaline with narrow, black margins. Terminal half of legs yellow, proximal half mixed red, yellow, and black, third pair long, dangled beneath body in slow, hovering flight in the manner of paper wasps. Antennae bicolored laterally, brownish-black and yellow-orange. Wing length 10-17 mm (Eichlin & Duckworth, 1988). **Similar species:** Very similar to closely related *P. aureocincta*, but that species has a complete or nearly complete yellow-orange band on anterior margin of segment 4 (Eichlin & Duckworth, 1988). Absolute specific differentiation, though, may require genitalic dissection.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Rural, urban, and forested areas and field edges where its food plants occur.

FOOD: Trees of the family Oleaceae, such as ash (*Fraxinus*), lilac (*Syringa*), and fringe-tree (*Chionanthus*) (Eichlin & Duckworth, 1988).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Not attracted to lights but may visit flowers. Most easily seen by employing synthetic pheromone traps, to which males are strongly attracted (see Taft, Smitley, & Snow, 2004, for list of species-specific pheromone blends).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS:

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

COMMENTS: This species closely mimics a *Polistes* paper wasp in both appearance and behavior. *P. syringae* does not pose a threat to ash trees in North Carolina, given the prevalence of *Fraxinus* in the state. However, the arrival of the Emerald Ash Borer beetle (*Agilus planipennis*) in the state in 2013 could potentially impact populations of *P. syringae* in the future. Also known as Lilac Borer.