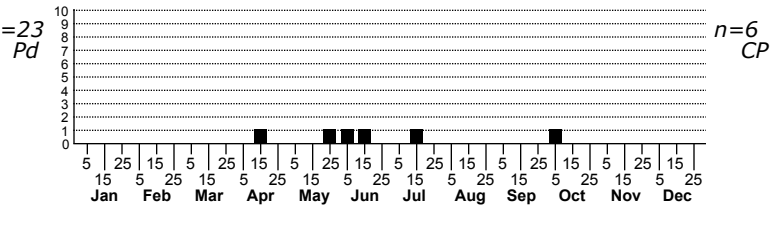
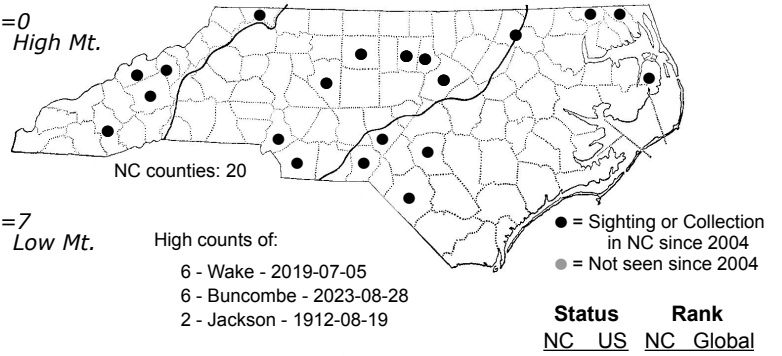
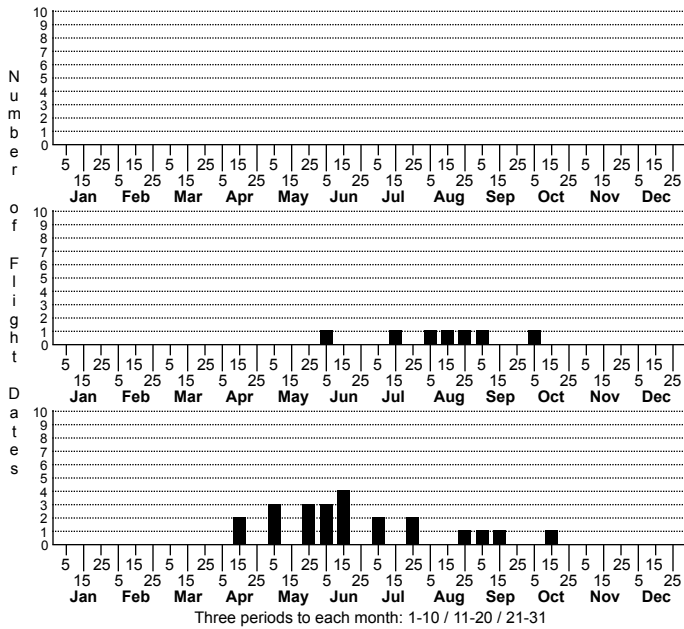


# *Prochoreutis inflatella* Skullcap Skeletonizer Moth



FAMILY: Choreutidae SUBFAMILY: Choreutinae TRIBE: [Choreutini]

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: The genus *Prochoreutis* has around 30 recognized species. Most are found in Eurasia, but five occur in North America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Heppner (2020)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a small, but distinctively marked species that is easily recognizable. The forewing is dull orange with a dark fuscous area in the middle that is heavily powdered with white scales. The apical third is orange, with two silvery metallic bands and a triangular white mark between them on the costa. The adults are active during the day and are often spotted resting on vegetation or flowers. The detailed description that follows is based on the description by Heppner (2020). The head is shining fuscous with white speckling on the frons. The labial palp is white basally, with alternating bands of fuscous and white on the prominent ventral scale tufts. The antenna has alternating bands of fuscous and white. The thorax is fuscous with white speckling, and has a row of silvery-metallic scales at the posterior margin of the mesonotum. The legs are white proximally, with dark brown on the tibia and dark rings on the tarsi. The forewing is orange at the base and the apical third. The area in between is blackish-fuscous and heavily speckled with white. There are several silvery-iridescent markings, including a partial or complete fascia at the wing base, a curved fascia at two-thirds that borders the fuscous area distally, a subterminal line, and a short streak along the inner margin at about two-thirds. There are three white marks along the costa, including a conspicuous triangular mark at about four-fifths. The fringe is fuscous with white scales distally, and with a subterminal fine line of dark brown scales. The hindwing is fuscous-tan and paler towards the base, with a white and a silvery-iridescent mark near the tornus. The fringe is fuscous except for white along the termen. The abdomen is golden fuscous to light brown, with pale posterior-marginal scales on each tergite.

DISTRIBUTION: *Prochoreutis inflatella* is found in eastern North America and northeastern Mexico. The range includes southern Canada (Manitoba; Ontario; Quebec) and much of the eastern US from Maine southward to northern Florida, and westward to eastern Texas, Oklahoma, Iowa, eastern Nebraska, and Minnesota. An apparent disjunct occurs in Colorado. As of 2023, our records are mostly from the Piedmont, with a few scattered records from the Coastal Plain and lower elevations in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults have been recorded from February through November in areas outside of North Carolina, with a seasonal peak from May through September. As of 2023, our records extend from mid-April through early October. Local populations appear to have two or more broods per year in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, but only one in the mountains.

HABITAT: Populations are dependent on species of skullcaps. One of the known host is a wetland species, but other species that grow in woodland settings are likely used.

FOOD: Larvae are skeletonizers of Skullcaps (*Scutellaria*). The known hosts include Marsh Skullcap (*S. galericulata*) at northern latitudes (probably extirpated in North Carolina), and Mad-dog Skullcap (*S. lateriflora*), which is widespread in North Carolina. Many of our records are from sites that do not support *S. lateriflora*, which suggests that other *Scutellaria* are also used. Jim Petranka found this species using Hyssop Skullcap (*Scutellaria integrifolia*) in a mesic forest setting in the Blue Ridge, and Terry Harrison (microleps.org) reported that the larvae use woodland species of skullcaps in Illinois.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults occasionally visit lights, but are most often spotted either resting on leaves or nectaring on flowers during the day. More information is needed on host use in North Carolina.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S4]

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

COMMENTS: This is a regularly encountered species in the Piedmont, but less so elsewhere. Populations appear to be reasonably secure based on the number of observations of this species.