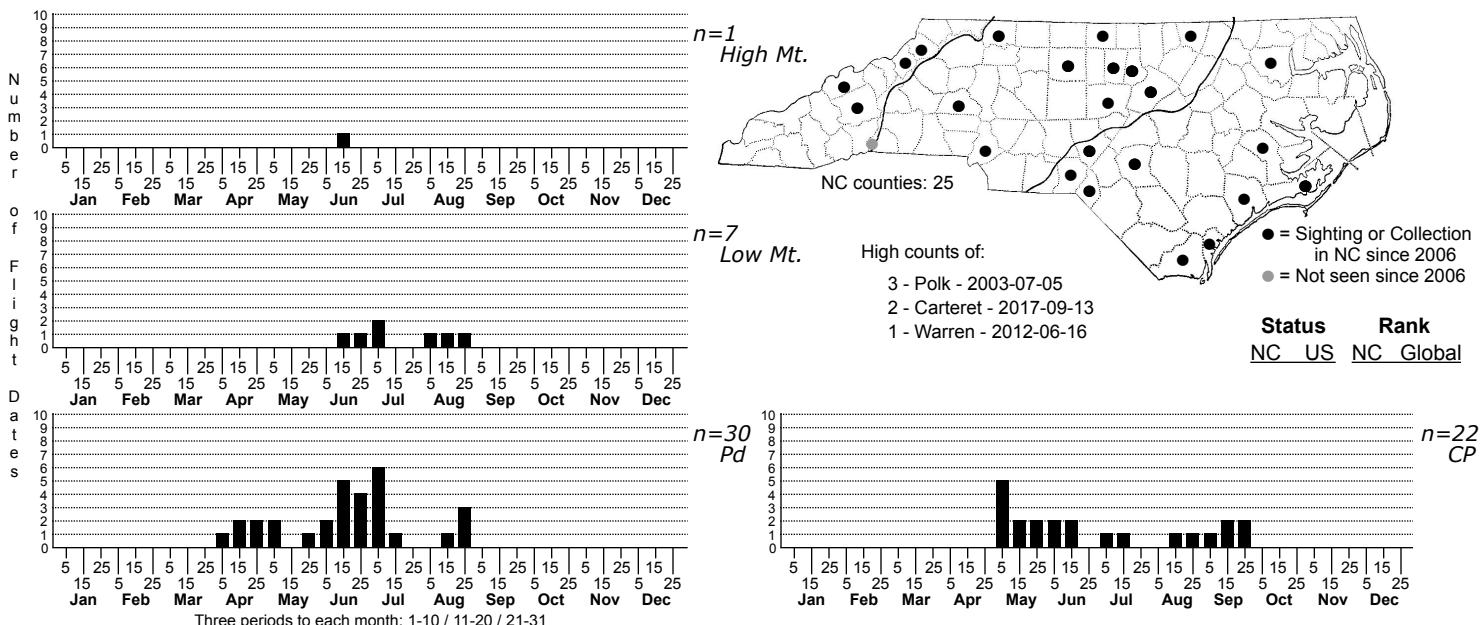


Tebenna gnaphaliella Everlasting Tebenna



FAMILY: Choreutidae SUBFAMILY: Choreutinae TRIBE: [Choreutini]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Tebenna gnaphaliella* is a small genus with eight species that occur in North America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Kearfott (1902)

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based in part on that of Kearfott (1902) and Forbes (1923). The head is fuscous with silvery gray dusting, while the labial palp is fuscous with white at the base. The antenna has black and white annulations. The thorax is ocherous yellow to dull orange, with a median line of silvery gray scales that terminates before reaching the posterior margin. Most of the forewing is overlain with metallic silvery gray to grayish white scales. These form a broad, oblique band from about one-third to two-fifths the wing length that extends from the costa to the dorsal margin. The band contrasts sharply with the basal third, which is ocherous yellow to dull orange, and has three longitudinal lines of the silvery gray scales (one along the costa) that extend from near the base, to the broad band of concolorous scales at one-third. The lines of scales tend to mask the underlying blackish coloration. The metallic silvery gray scales fill much of the remainder of the apical two-thirds of the wing, except where black marks are present. These mostly consist of velvety black, irregular spots with lead-colored centers. Two are present immediately behind the wide band of silvery gray scales at one-third, including a large one near the center of the wing (sometimes broken into two small spots), and a smaller one near the dorsal margin. Two or more additional small spots are usually present posterior to these in the subterminal region. The outer marginal has a narrow brown band that is sprinkled with white scales. The band extends out onto the fringe, which is brown with fine white lines at the base and apex. The hindwing is fuscous, with a large, whitish subterminal dash near the middle. The fringe is fuscous with two lighter marginal lines, including a thin one at the base and a wider one near the middle. The outer edge of the fringe is paler. The abdomen is brown, with a band of whitish scales at the posterior edge of each segment. The legs are so thickly covered with white scales that the ground color is almost hidden except for tarsi, which have alternate black and white rings near the joints.

DISTRIBUTION: *Tebenna gnaphaliella* is found in Quebec and throughout much of the eastern US, as well as in California and Colorado. In the East, populations occur from Maine southward to Florida, and westward to eastern Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, and southern Wisconsin. This species occurs statewide from coastal regions to the higher elevations in the mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults have been observed from February through December in areas outside on North Carolina, with a peak in seasonal activity from April through September. As of 2024, our records are from late March through late September. Local populations appear to be double-brooded in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, and single-brooded in the mountains. Larvae have been found in North Carolina in early April (Eiseman, 2019).

HABITAT: Local populations are most commonly found in sunny and often dry habitats where the host plants grow. Representative habitats include roadsides, fields, urban lots, woodland borders, and clearcuts, as well as in more natural habitats such as open woodlands and open coastal pine forests. The adults nectar during the day on flowers such as fleabanes (*Erigeron* spp.) and Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), so sites that support both the larval hosts and nectar resources for the adults are ideal.

FOOD: The larvae feed on cudweeds (Asteraceae) and their relatives (Kearfott, 1902; Forbes, 1923; Powell and Opler, 2009). The most important hosts in North Carolina are probably Heller's Rabbit-tobacco (*Pseudognaphalium helleri*), Fragrant Rabbit-tobacco (*P. obtusifolium*), and Spoonleaf Purple Everlasting (*Gamochaeta purpurea*), although other congeners may be used. Pussytoes (*Antennaria* spp.) are also used as hosts. Powell and Opler (2009) noted that adults have been reared in California from several native species of *Pseudognaphalium* as well as an introduced species (*P. luteoalbum*). Other hosts that have been reported in the western US include Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) and an introduced *Helichrysum* species. In North Carolina, Tracy Feldman has reared a larva from *Gamochaeta purpurea*.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights, but many records are from daytime sightings of adults that are either resting on vegetation or nectaring on composites and other wildflowers.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: This species is seemingly secure since it does well in human-altered habitats.