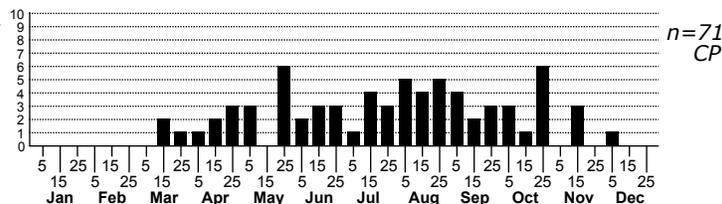
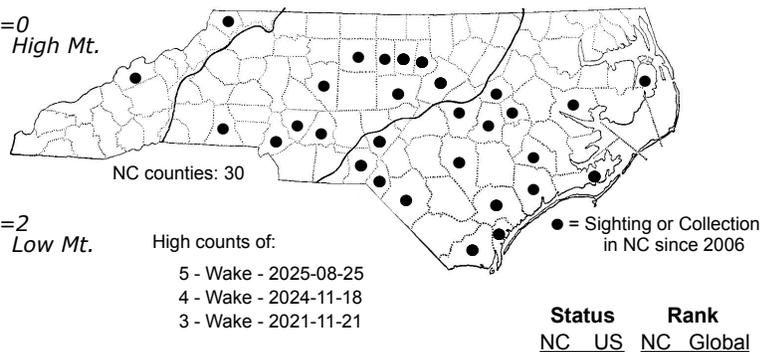
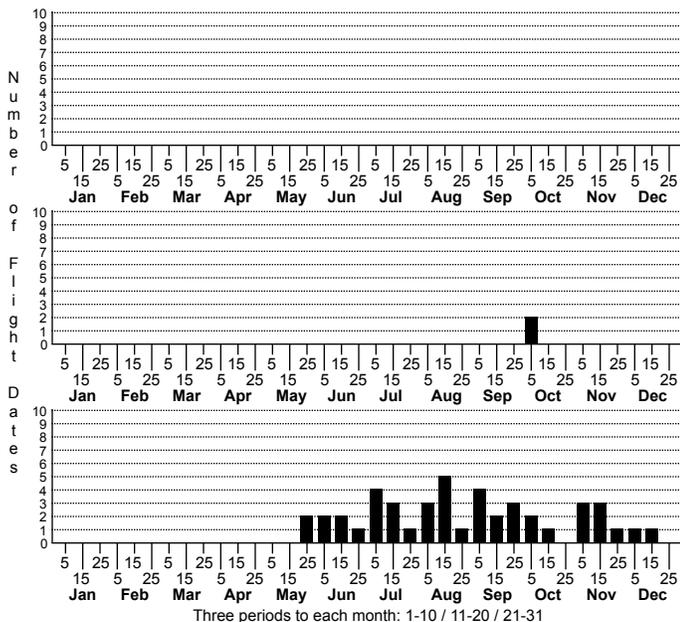


Bactra verutana Javelin Moth



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Bactrini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Frick (1994)

ID COMMENTS: *Bactra verutana* is a small grayish to clay-colored moth that has two diffuse blotches near the middle of the wing, and a series of alternating white and blackish marks along the inner margin that extend from the near the basal one-fourth of the wing distally to the tornus, then across the outer margin to the apex. The face, vertex, and thorax are more-or-less concolorous with the ground color of the forewing, which can vary from light clay to gray. The forewing ground is scattered with dark-brown to blackish specks, and often has two much larger, diffuse, blackish blotches near the center of the wing, with one just before one-half the length of the wing from the base, and the second at around three-fourths. These are variably expressed and can be reduced in size or missing. The costa has a series of blackish, triangular marks along its length. The spaces between these are usually filled with the ground color on the basal half of the wing and with pairs of short, pale to whitish lines on the apical half of the wing that become more elongated towards the apex. The inner margin has alternating white and blackish marks that extend from the near the basal one-fourth of the wing across the outer margin to the apex.

Bactra furfurana is the only other member of this genus in North Carolina and can be distinguished by possessing a median dark patch that is better defined and extends all the way to the costa.

DISTRIBUTION: *Bactra verutana* is broadly distributed across eastern North America, and in the West in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, California, southeastern Arizona and Colorado. In the East, it occurs in southern Canada (Ontario; Quebec; Nova Scotia) and in the US in every state east of the Mississippi River. Beyond the Mississippi River, the range extends westward as western Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, southeastern Nebraska, Iowa and Wisconsin. This species has also been reported from Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, and in Mozambique and South Africa where it is presumably has been introduced. It is found statewide in North Carolina, but as of 2025 appears to be restricted to a few lower-elevation sites in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Southern populations are multivoltine and can be found throughout the year in Florida, Louisiana, Texas and other southern localities. Populations in Canada and other northern locality have a much more abbreviated flight season and probably produce only one or two broods per year. As of 2025, our records extend from mid-March to early-December, with local populations in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain producing several broods per year.

HABITAT: This species is commonly found in agricultural settings and disturbed areas where it feeds on weedy *Cyperus* species. We also have several records from natural communities such as the Sandhills and coastal dune and scrub communities where it probably feeds on native sedges.

FOOD: Larvae feed on members of the Cyperaceae and Juncaceae, with species of *Cyperus* being the primary hosts (Forbes, 1923; Frick, 1985; Brown et al., 2010; Shropshire and Tallamy, 2025). Specific host genera include sawgrasses (*Cladium*), flatsedges (*Cyperus*), rushes (*Juncus*), and bulrushes (*Scirpus*). In feeding trials, Frick (1985) and his colleagues found that the larvae heavily attacked six species of *Cyperus*, as well as Purple Nutsedge (*Cyperus rotundus*) and Yellow Nutsedge *C. esculentus*, which are well-known agricultural weeds and hosts. The larvae also readily fed on several native species such as Redroot Flatsedge (*C. erythrorhizos*), Ricefield Flatsedge (*C. iria*) and Variable Flatsedge (*C. difformis*).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights. More information is needed on the use of native species of sedges and rushes in North Carolina and elsewhere.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S4

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

COMMENTS: