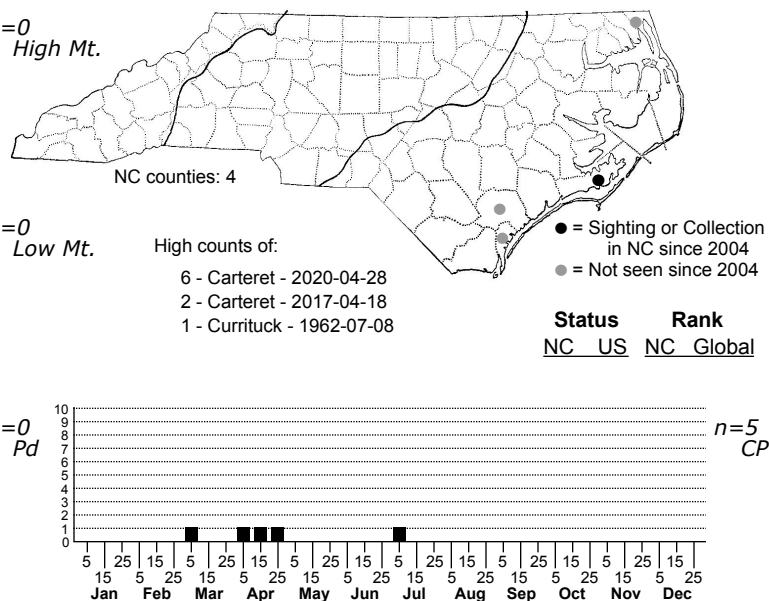


Rhyacionia aktita No common name



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Eucosmini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Rhyacionia* is widespread in the Holarctic Region, ranging from Japan and Asia to the Caribbean Antilles and Mexico (Powell and Miller, 1978). There are 33 described species worldwide and 24 in North America. The larvae feed on the needles, buds, and growing tips of pines.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Powell and Miller (1978)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Powell and Miller (1978)

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based on that of Powell and Miller (1978). The labial palp is short, with the second segment length 0.9X the eye diameter. The third segment is 0.3X as long as the second. The palp, front of the head, and crown are gray with white tipped-scales. The dorsum of the thorax is similar but darker. The basal one-fourth of the forewing is gray and forms a faint basal patch. There are four or five blotch-like irregular orange to rust bands that are from a few to many scales wide, and that either partly or entirely cross the wing. The basal patch and crossband just beyond the middle sometimes appear bluish to the unaided eye. The apex, including the fringe, is heavily dusted with brick-red scales. The fringe, except near the apex, is dark gray with a black line extending around the termen. The hindwing is pale grayish brown, with a fringe is paler and nearly white. The abdomen is shining light gray above, and the legs are gray with white bands exteriorly that are sometimes sprinkled with rust. The metathoracic legs are much paler than the forelegs.

Powell and Miller (1978) noted that *Rhyacionia aktita* is externally similar to *R. frustrana* and is best identified by genitalia. In North Carolina, *R. aktita* appears to be restricted to sites close to the coast and typically flies during the late-winter and early spring months. In contrast, *R. frustrana* is well-represented in the Piedmont and has a much longer flight period from late winter through early September. Both species can co-occur locally along the coast, and forewing length is helpful in sorting the two species out locally, with *R. aktita* averaging around 7 mm versus only 5 mm for *R. frustrana*. Genitalia may be required to separate the two at coastal locales for specimens with intermediate wing lengths, particularly when specimens are collected during the winter and spring months.

DISTRIBUTION: *Rhyacionia aktita* is found in coastal regions from Maine and New Jersey southward to Florida, and westward along the Gulf Coast to eastern Texas (Powell and Miller, 1978). As of 2021, our records are all from coastal sites.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been recorded from February through July in areas outside of North Carolina. As of 2021, our records extends from early March through early July.

HABITAT: The larvae feed on the buds and new shoots of pines and inhabit pine forests in coastal areas. The specific hosts that are used in North Carolina are unknown.

FOOD: The adults have been reared from pupae overwintering in the dead shoots of Slash Pine (*P. elliottii*), Pond Pine (*P. serotina*), and Loblolly Pine (*P. taeda*).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults occasionally come to lights and have been reared from infected pine shoots.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SU

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 uncommon in the state, but additional information is needed on its distribution and abundance before we can assess its conservation status.