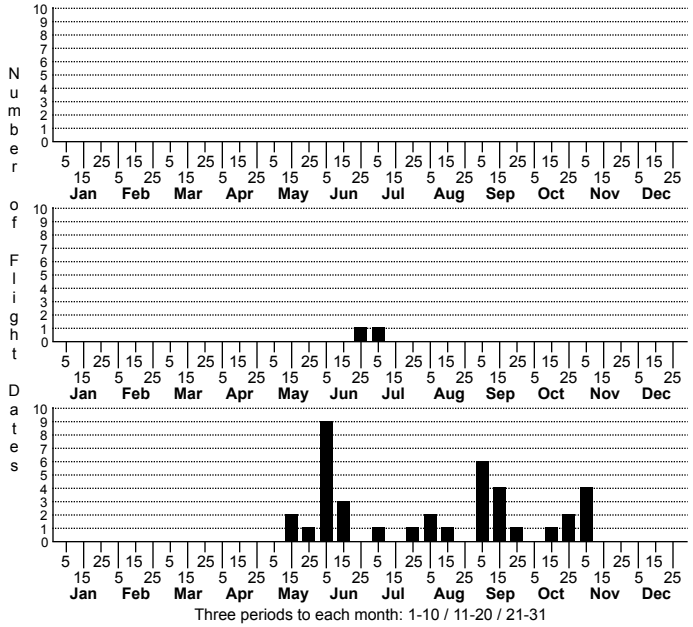
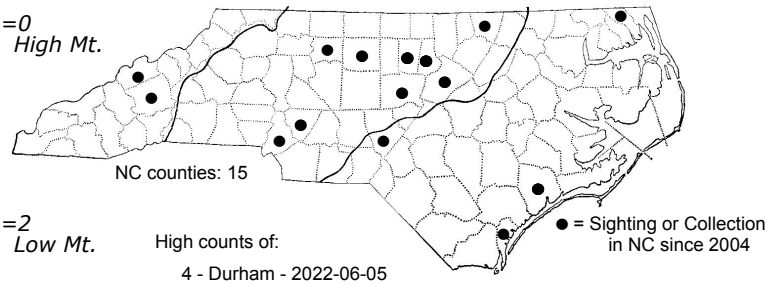
# *Mea bipunctella* Two-spotted Mea Moth

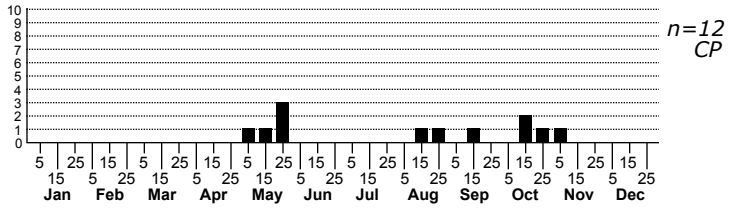



High counts of:

4 - Durham - 2022-06-05
3 - Guilford - 2022-05-25
3 - Durham - 2023-07-10

| Status | | Rank | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NC | US | NC | Global |




FAMILY: Tineidae SUBFAMILY: Meessiinae TRIBE: [Meessiini]
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Leckie and Beadle (2018)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Dietz (1905)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctly marked species with boldly contrasting black-and-white patterning on the forewing, and white tufts that contrast with the black face and sides of the head. The following detailed description is based on that of Dietz (1905). The labial palp is brown, with the apices of the second and third joints paler. The maxillary palp is yellowish. The face and anterior part of the head is black, while the remainder of the head and tufts are white. The antenna is nearly as long as the forewing and brown, except for a slightly paler apex. The thorax is white with a large oval, dark brown spot on each side before the insertion of the forewing. The ground color of the forewing is white, and is often overlain with a sordid tan wash that is most prominent on the posterior half. The costa has a black, irregular band that extends from base to the apex. An inward bulge occurs at about one-third and four-fifths the wing length. The inner margin has a narrow, irregular, black streak that extends from near the base to about one-half the wing length. The cilia are whitish to light tan with a blackish spot near the apex. The hindwing is grayish fuscous with a slightly lighter fringe, and the abdomen is grayish fuscous above. The legs are dark above with black and whitish banding on the tarsi. The rear leg is generally lighter than the other two.

DISTRIBUTION: Mea bipunctella is primarily found in the southeastern US from southern New Jersey southward to central Florida and westward to Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and southern Illinois. This species appears to be uncommon in most areas of the Coastal Plain of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, but common in other areas of the Coastal Plain to the west. As of 2020, most of our records are from the Piedmont, with only two site records from the Coastal Plain, and one from the western mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults are in flight nearly year-round in Florida and from April through October elsewhere. As of 2020, our records extend from early June through early November. There is little evidence of a seasonal peak in activity, which suggests that populations may have two or more overlapping broods in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats are undocumented. This species presumably does not feed on living plants and is not strongly dependent on particular host plants. Most of our records are from semi-wooded residential neighborhoods.

FOOD: Like most North American tineids, the larvae and their food resources have never been reported. The larvae presumably feed on either detritus or on living fungi and lichens.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

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 seem to be reasonably secure in the state, particularly in the Piedmont, but additional information on its distribution, abundance and habitat requirements before we can fully assess its conservation status.