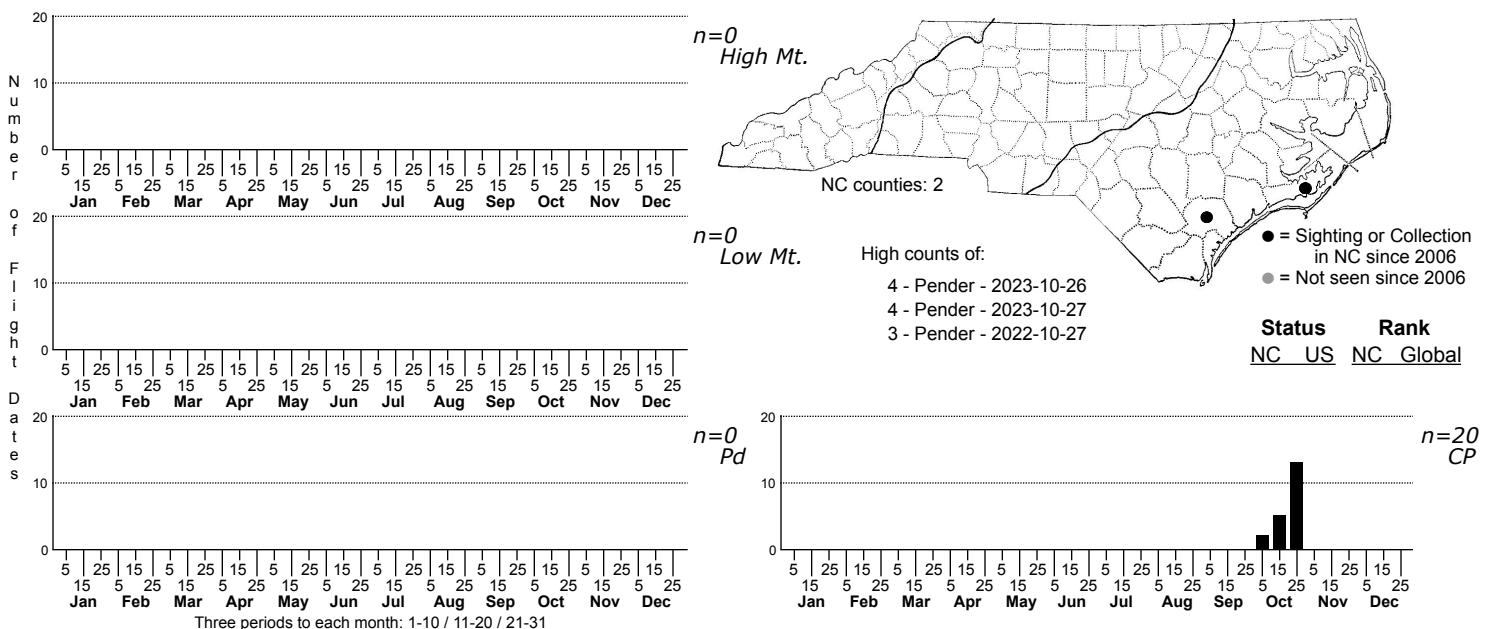


Pelochrista oraria Coastal Pelochrista



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Eucosmini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *< i>Pelochrista* is a large Holarctic genus of tortricids with around 75% of the 226 described species being native to North America (Wright and Gilligan, 2017). The highest species richness occurs in the western half of North America. The genus has a long and confusing taxonomic history, with many of the species formerly placed in the genus *< i>Eucosma*. Gilligan et al. (2014) conducted a comprehensive phylogenetic analysis of *< i>Pelochrista*, *< i>Eucosma*, and related genera and redefined the genus *< i>Eucosma* and *< i>Pelochrista* based on differences in female genitalia. The great majority of *< i>Pelochrista* species are known only from adults, which likely reflects the fact that the larvae of most species bore into stem bases and roots and are concealed from view. Members of the Asteraceae are the likely hosts for most species (Wright and Gilligan, 2017), but much work need to be done to identifying the hosts.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Wright (2011); Wright and Gilligan (2017)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based on that of Wright (2011). The lower frons is creamy white and the head, labial palps, antennae, and thorax are brown. The legs have whitish posterior surfaces with tarsi that have inconspicuous tan bands at the distal extremities of the tarsomeres. The ground color of the forewing is pale brown and is extensively marked with fine brown reticulations. The ground is overlain with two conspicuous dark brown marks. The first is a sharply defined, sub-basal patch that begins on the inner margin and extends to near the middle of the wing where it narrows to a rounded apex. The second is a broad, median triangular-shaped mark that is darkest near the inner margin and fades towards the costa. The posterior end of the triangular mark has a tapering extension that runs towards and often to the apex. The sub-basal and median patches are both thinly edged with white, and a narrow postmedian band is sometimes evident that extends from near the tornus inwardly where it may connect to the apical extension from the median patch. The wing lacks an ocellus and the costa lacks pale strigulae. The fringe scales are blackish gray to gray brown with a thin terminal line, while the hindwing is grayish brown.

< i>Pelochrista oraria is best distinguished from *< i>P. dorsisignatana* and *< i>P. similiana* by its relatively large size (mean forewing length = 10.8 mm vs. 9.4 mm and 9.2 mm, respectively) and by its forewing maculation and geographic range. In North Carolina, *< i>P. oraria* is restricted to coastal and maritime habitats, while *< i>P. dorsisignatana* and *< i>P. similiana* are found in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge.

DISTRIBUTION: *< i>Pelochrista oraria* is found in maritime habitats along the Atlantic Seaboard from Nova Scotia southward to North Carolina. As of 2022, our records are all from barrier islands.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Local populations appear to be univoltine, with records extending from August through October. Wright (2011) reported one record from Long Island for 30 May, which suggests that populations may double brood on rare occasion. As of 2022, all of our records are from October.

HABITAT: This species appears to be restricted to the tidewater region from North Carolina north to Nova Scotia, but it is unclear whether it is associated with marshes, coastal scrub, or other habitats associated with sounds or barrier islands.

FOOD: The hosts are undocumented.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S2S3

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

COMMENTS: *< i>Pelochrista oraria* reaches its southern limit in North Carolina and has specialized habitat requirements. As of 2022, we have only three site records. We currently do not have sufficient information on its distribution and abundance to accurately assess its conservation status within the state.