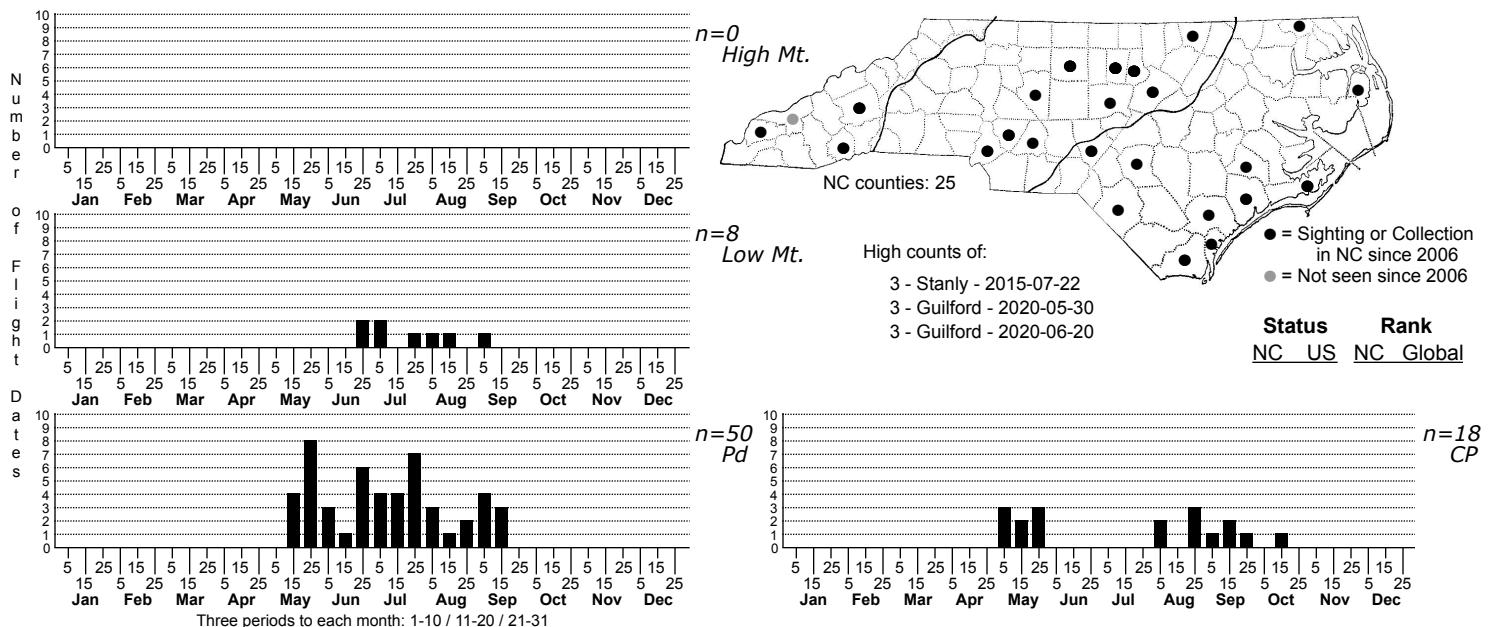


# *Xylesthia pruniramiella* Clemens' Bark Moth



FAMILY: Tineidae SUBFAMILY: Tineidae-unplaced TRIBE: [Tineidae-unplaced]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Xylesthia* is a small genus with only two currently recognized species; both are found in North America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Clemens (1859); Dietz (1905)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following is based in part of the description by Clemens (1859) and Dietz (1905). The head is grayish white to whitish with a conspicuous tuft. The labial palp is ascending, and the second joint has a dense brush of coarse hair beneath that projects forward to produce a 'beaked' appearance. The antenna is light brown to yellowish white and about two-thirds the length of the forewing, while the thorax is grayish white and dusted with brown. The forewing has a patchwork of blackish brown, yellowish brown, and cream to whitish dusting that on some specimens has a reddish hue. The pattern of dark dusting is variable, but tends to be concentrated on the costal half just beyond one-half the wing length, and in the sub-terminal region where it is often represented as one or two spots. There are three or four equally spaced fascia-like lines of raised scales that run from the inner margin to the costa. Each consists of a relatively large, circular tuft of scales at the inner margin and a row of smaller raised scales that continues from the tuft towards the costa. These may be missing or poorly formed on worn specimens and appear as whitish lines. The fringe is fuscous and has two or three darker dividing lines. The region at the inner angle is often whitish and contrast with the remainder of the fringe. The hindwing and abdomen are dark brown. The legs are yellowish white and dusted with fuscous, and the tarsal joints are pale at the apex.

DISTRIBUTION: *Xylesthia pruniramiella* is widely distributed across the eastern and central US. Populations also occur in extreme southern Canada (Manitoba; Ontario; Quebec), eastern Mexico, and as scattered populations in Arizona, Colorado, and southern California. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina, but is most prevalent in the Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults have been recorded from March through November in areas outside of North Carolina, with most from June through August. As of 2020, our records extend from mid-May through mid-September, with no evidence of a strong seasonal peak in breeding activity.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats are poorly documented. The larvae appear to feed on fungi that infect trees. Our records are from both semi-wooded neighborhoods and natural sites that are forested.

FOOD: The larvae appear to be fungivores. Clemens (1859) found the larvae feeding within woody galls on the European Plum (<i>Prunus domestica</i>), and it is likely that they feed on other fungi that attack dead or dying trees. It is uncertain whether this species is a specialist on members of the Rosaceae, or if it uses a broader array of host species.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S4S5]

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 widespread and abundant in the state.  
March 2026

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft