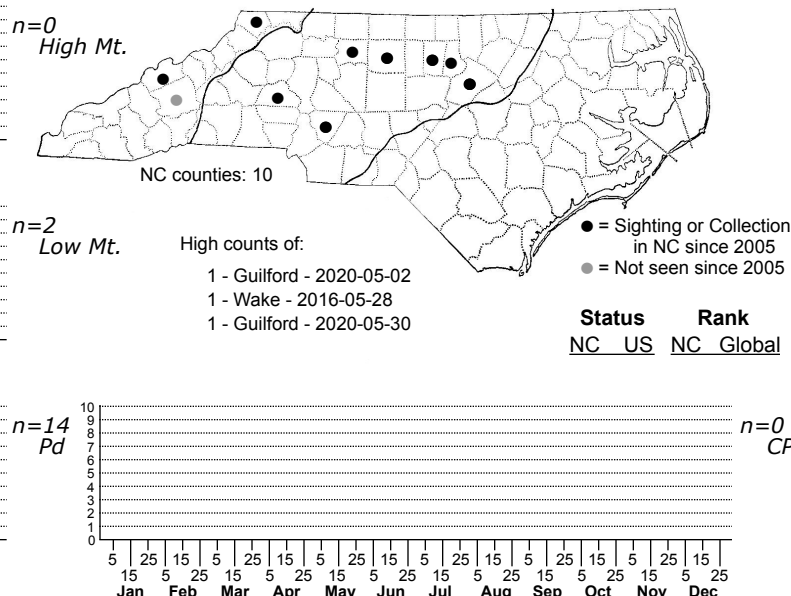
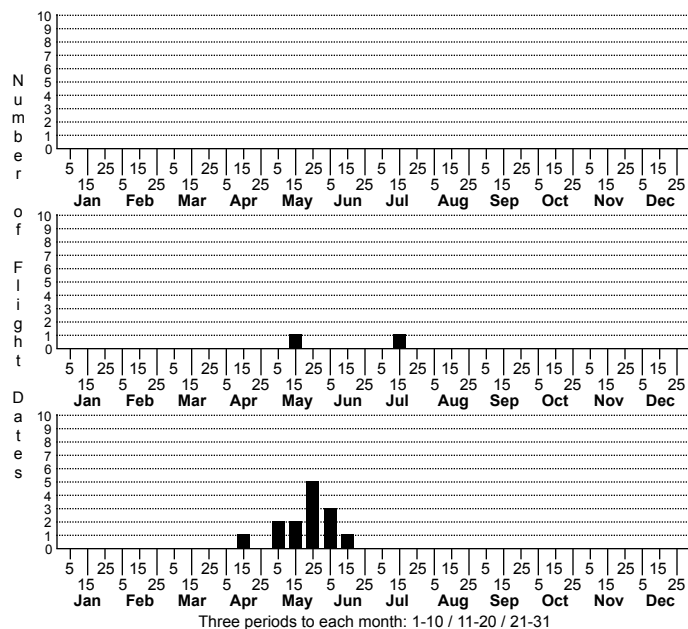


# Epiblema obfusca Blue-washed Goldenrod Borer Moth



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Eucosmini  
TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS:

## FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

### ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Wright and Gilligan (2023)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based in part on that of Wright and Gilligan (2023). In this species the face, head, thorax, and base of the antennae are covered with inky blue-black scales. The thorax is blackish-brown, while the forewing ground color is a dirty grayish white with darker markings. An outwardly angulated basal patch covers the basal third of the wing and varies from smoky gray to blackish-gray. It is followed by a diffuse grayish white medial band that has well-developed, gray transverse reticulations. Following this is a vaguely defined blackish-gray pretornal mark. The entire ocelloid region that follows the pretornal mark is more whitish than gray, rendering the ocellus barely detectable. The termen has an inky blue-black band that extends from the tornus to just beyond the middle of the wing. The hindwing is black with a white fringe on the posterior margin.

This species most closely resembles *E. discretivana* but is a little larger (mean FWL = 8.0 vs. 6.9 mm) and has inky blue-black scales on the face, head, thorax, and base of the antennae that are lacking in *E. discretivana*. The two are most easily distinguished by the dark band along the termen. It extends from the apex to the tornus in *E. discretivana* but terminates well before reaching the tornus (at the CUA vein) in *E. obfusca*. *Epiblema obfusca* also resembles *E. desertana*, but in the latter the gray transverse reticulations in the medial band are poorly developed and the dark band on the termen extends all the way from the apex to the tornus.

DISTRIBUTION: *Epiblema obfusca* is found in the eastern U.S. and in portions of southern Canada, including Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. There is also an isolated population in Washington State that appears to be this species (Wright and Gilligan, 2023). The range in the U.S. extends from Maine southwestward through the Appalachian region to central Alabama, central Mississippi and Louisiana, and westward to western Tennessee, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and northeastern North Dakota. *Epiblema obfusca* is largely absent from the southeastern Coastal Plain. As of 2024, all of our records are from the Piedmont and lower-elevations in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Populations appear to be univoltine throughout the range, with the adults flying from April through July. Most populations have a season peak in May and June. As of 2024, our records range from mid-May through mid-July.

HABITAT: This species is commonly found in fragmented landscapes with fields, forests, infrastructure corridors and residential developments.

FOOD: The larvae appear to specialize on goldenrods (Forbes, 1923; Heinrich, 1923; Clarke, 1935; Putman, 1942; MacKay, 1959; Miller, 1987; Lam et al., 2011). The only known host that we are aware of is Tall Goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*) as reported by Putman (1942). Other goldenrods are presumably used, but this has yet to be verified.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found burrowing in goldenrod stems.

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:

March 2025

The Moths of North Carolina - Early Draft