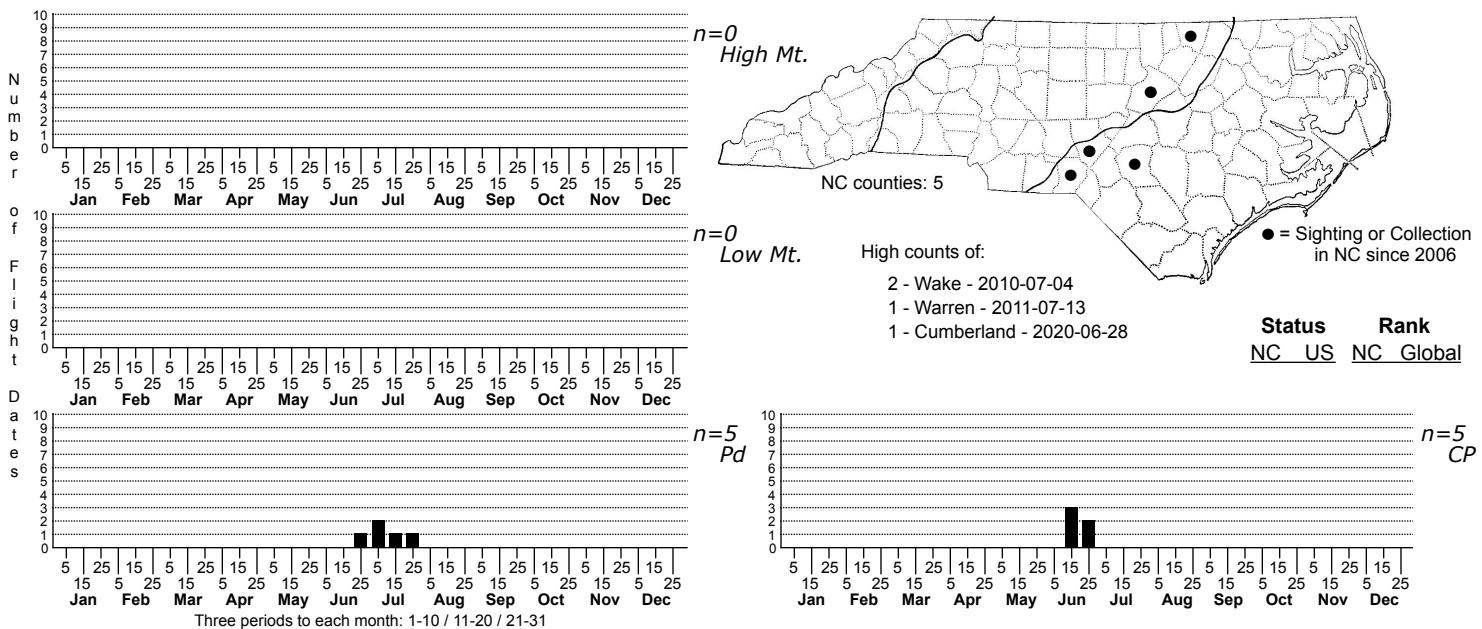


# *Acrolophus cressoni* Cresson's Grass Tubeworm Moth



**FAMILY:** Tineidae **SUBFAMILY:** [Acrolophinae] **TRIBE:** [Acrolophini]

**TAXONOMIC COMMENTS:** The genus *Acrolophus* is a mostly neotropical taxon with over 250 described species, including 54 that are currently recognized in North America. The labial palps on the males of many species are very elongated and densely hairy. The larvae of some species live in silk-lined burrows in the ground and feed on the roots and young shoots of grasses and herbs. However, the life histories of most species remain undocumented and in need of study. Members of this genus were previously placed in their own family (Acrolophidae), but they are now treated as a subgroup within the Tineidae based on molecular phylogenetic studies.

**FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:** Leckie and Beadle (2018)

**ONLINE PHOTOS:**

**TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:** Hasbrouck (1964)

**TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:**

**ID COMMENTS:** This is a small, reddish-brown species of *Acrolophus* with a somewhat more slender build than most species. The labial palps, head, and thorax lack the dense coarse tufting that is common in many *Acrolophus*. The following description is based in part on that of Walsingham's original description (see Hasbrouck, 1964). The labial palp is short and brown, with ochreous scales intermixed. The apical joint has an indistinct pale ochreous band around its middle. The antenna is pale brown. The forewings are reddish brown, with scattered, purplish-fuscous, raised tufts that are concentrated along the dorsal margin. There are usually four squarish, pale patches with darker regions in between. These include one before, and one beyond the middle of the dorsal margin, one near the middle of the costa, and one at or just before the apex. These tend to be arranged with dark areas in between to form an indistinct chess-board pattern. In some specimens the median costal and the antemedian dorsal pale squares are joined to form an angulated fascia. The abdomen, hindwing, and hindwing cilia are all dull brown. The first two pairs of legs are conspicuously spotted with brown and ochreous, while the third pair is ochreous on the tibia, and spotted with brown on the tarsal joints.

**DISTRIBUTION:** *Acrolophus cressoni* is a southern species that occurs from North Carolina, Tennessee, and western Kentucky, southward to southern Florida and Mississippi, and westward to Arizona, Texas and Oklahoma. As of 2025, we have ten records that are all from counties along the Fall-line, including both the Piedmont and Upper Coastal Plain.

**FLIGHT COMMENT:** Adults are in flight from May through October in Florida, and May through August elsewhere outside of North Carolina. Populations are single-brooded in North Carolina. As of 2020, our records are from late June through late July.

**HABITAT:** The habitat requirements are poorly documented. This species is thought to feed on grasses and presumably prefers open, sunny areas.

**FOOD:** Heppner (2003) reported that this species feeds on grass, but did not provide any details or specific observations. If true, the larvae presumably feed on grass roots in underground burrows like certain other *Acrolophus* species. At present, little definitive information is known about its specific hosts or feeding mode.

**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 appears to be near the northern limit of its range in North Carolina. More information is needed on its distribution and abundance before we can assess its conservation status.