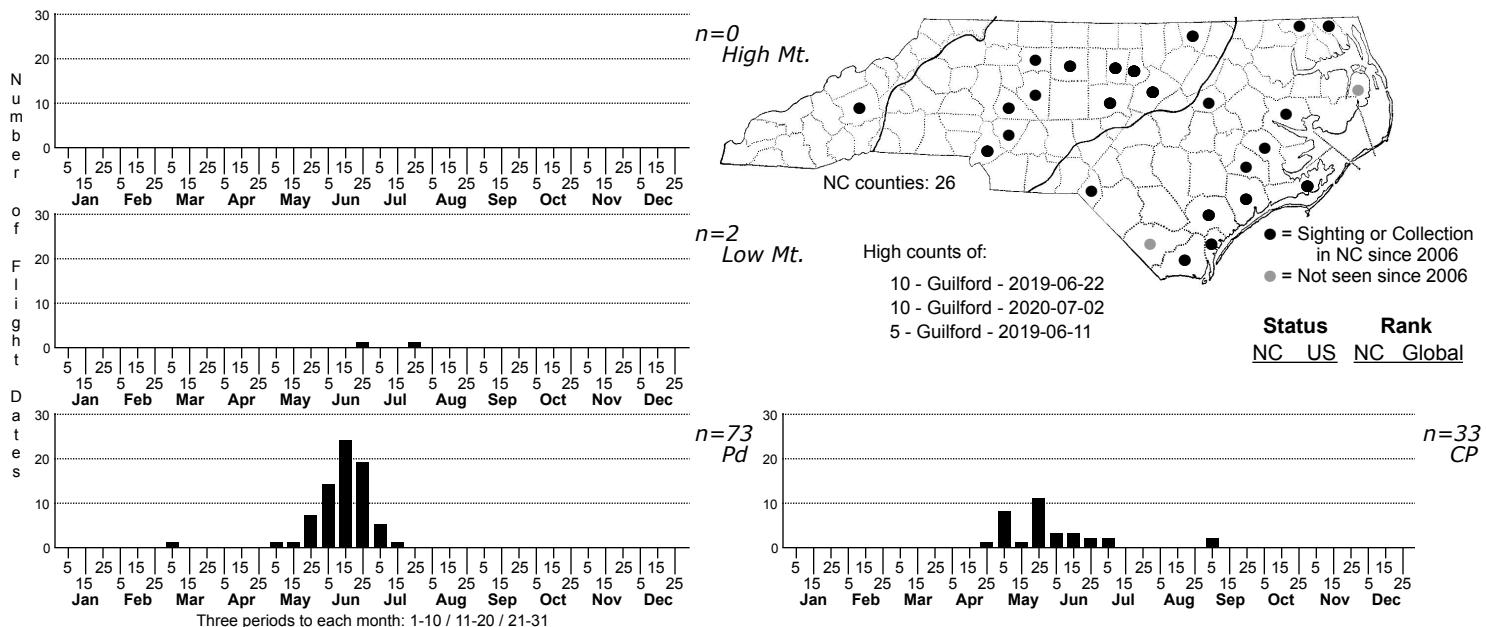


Acrolophus mycetophagus Frilly Grass Tubeworm Moth



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: Davis (1990)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a moderately small moth that has dull white forewings that are heavily marked with dark fuscous over the distal half. The legs have plumes of long, white hairs that are distinctive. The following description is based on that of Davis (1990). The labial palps are whitish, with the dorsal segment mostly fuscous. They are shorter than is seen in most *Acrolophus*, and extend dorsally to only slightly above the antennal bases. The head vestiture is relatively smooth, with piliform scales that are dull white. The antenna is approximately one-half the length of the forewing and light brown. The dorsum of the thorax is either uniformly white or with light brown to fuscous suffusion near the center. The ground color of the forewing is dull white. The basal third and sometimes the distal fourth are dull white, but occasionally with a fuscous suffusion. A dark fuscous suffusion extends obliquely across the wing from the subapical region to the middle of the inner margin. It tends to be more extensive on the female, and may obliterate or greatly reduce the proportion of white scales on the distal fourth of the wing. The hindwing is uniformly fuscous, with a paler, light brown fringe. The legs are light brown dorsally and white ventrally, with conspicuous plumes of long white hairs from the upper sections. The abdomen is brown to fuscous dorsally and cream colored ventrally.

DISTRIBUTION: *Acrolophus mycetophagus* is mostly restricted to the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of the southeastern US. The range is from eastern Texas eastward to Florida, and northward to northern Mississippi, Tennessee, southern Kentucky, and Virginia. In North Carolina, this species is well-represented in the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont, but scarce farther west. As of 2022, we have only two records for the mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults are active from February through October in the southernmost populations, and March through September elsewhere. Populations in North Carolina appear to be univoltine, with adults mostly flying from Mid-May through early July.

HABITAT: Local populations appear to be dependent on bracket fungi as food resources for larvae. We have records from semi-wooded residential neighborhoods as well as more natural, forested habitats.

FOOD: The larvae do not feed on living foliage. There is one record of an adult being reared from a bracket fungus in Florida (Davis, 1990). Details of the species of fungus or host tree that the fungus was using were not reported.

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 is seemingly secure within the state.