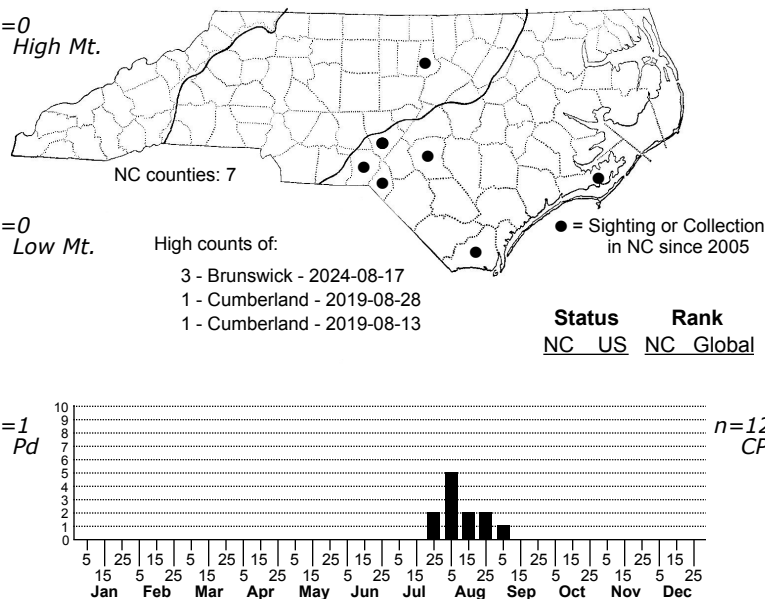
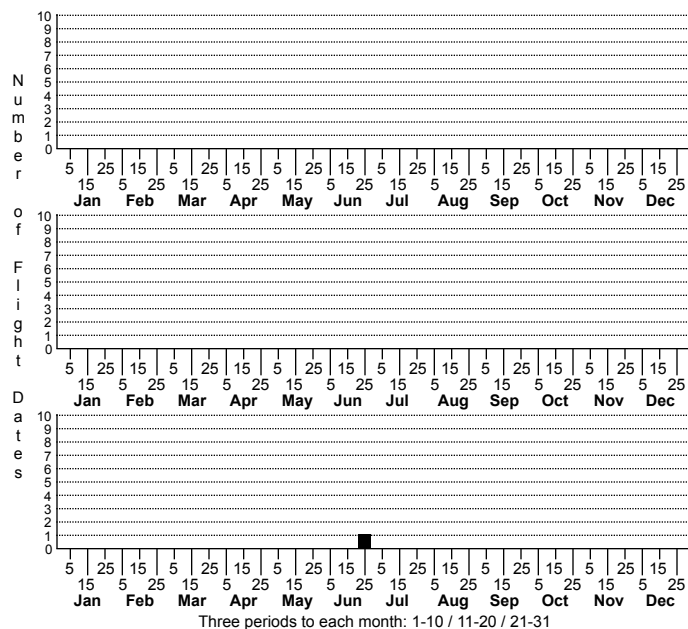


# *Acrolophus piger* Piger Grass Tubeworm Moth



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: The following is based in part on Dyer's original description (see Hasbrouck, 1964). The palp is erect, terminates above the vertex, is free from the front of the head, and is rather smoothly scaled. The thorax has a raised crest and is usually darker than the ground color of the forewings. The forewing ground color and patterning is variable, with the ground varying from reddish brown to light gray. There are dark brown to blackish specks and/or fine, short, transverse striations scattered throughout. A dark somewhat triangular blotch is usually present over the center of the wing that is widest at the costa (sometimes extending as far as to the subapical area) and narrows inwardly before terminating just before the inner margin. The anterior and posterior margins are often faintly mottled with blackish specks. Light gray forms often have the central triangular mark reduced or even missing. The hindwing is brown to blackish and darker than the forewing.

*Acrolophus forbesi* is externally similar to *A. piger* but is distantly related and can be easily separated using genitalia. In addition, the structure of the antenna and eye can be used to separate the two. In *A. piger* the eye is rather densely clothed with erect setae, and each antennal segment is completely encircled by at least one ring of scales. In *A. forbesi*, the eye has relatively few very short setae, and each antennal segment is clothed only dorsad or dorsolaterad with scales.

DISTRIBUTION: *Acrolophus piger* is a southern form that is found in the southeastern US from North Carolina southward to Florida, and westward to central Texas and Oklahoma. As of 2020, we have only a single site record from Cumberland County in the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Flight records extend from April through October. As of 2020, our two records are from August.

HABITAT: The hosts and associated habitats are undocumented.

FOOD: The hosts are undocumented. Heppner (2003) listed 'grass' for this and most other *Acrolophus* species, but did not provide specifics.

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: This species is near the northern limit of its range in North Carolina and appears to be rare in the state. However, more information on its distribution and habitat requirements are needed before we can assess its conservation status.