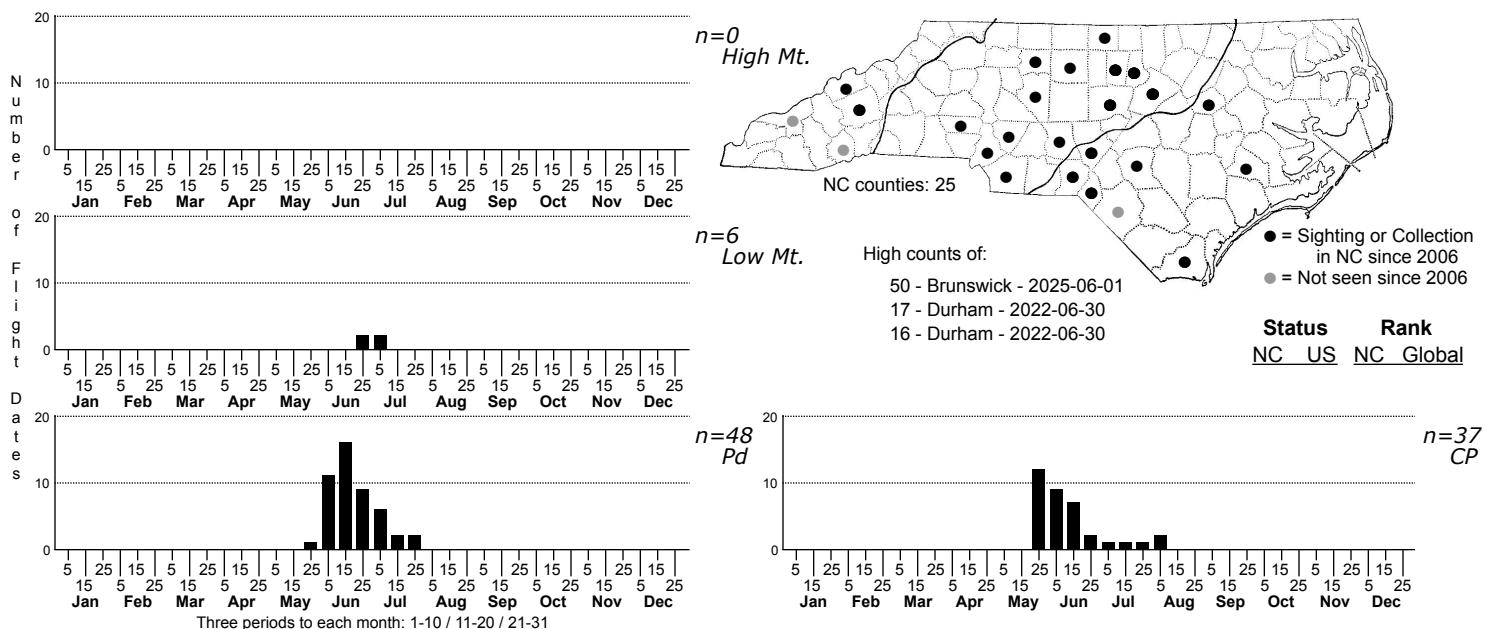


# *Acrolophus propinqua* Walsingham's Grass Tubeworm Moth



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:

### ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hasbrouck (1964)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This species varies widely in size and color. Several forms were described as separate species by earlier workers that were later treated as being conspecific with *Acrolophus propinqua* (Hasbrouck, 1964). Most forms are fairly plain and lack conspicuous spots or streaks of color. The form "busckellus" differs from typical forms by having a whitish streak along the inner margin, and in being speckled with several dark brown spots (Haimbach, cited by Hasbrouck, 1964). The males of *A. propinqua* have elongated palps that reach the posterior margin of the thorax. They are densely covered with hairy scales and are most typically fuscous, but sometimes darker and almost blackish in some color forms. The male antenna is stout, serrated, reddish to reddish brown, and lacks complete rings of raised scales around the segments. The head, thorax, and forewings are commonly reddish brown to purplish fuscous. The forewings often lack any conspicuous markings, but may be faintly brindled with dark marks. They sometimes have faint dark spotting on the termen and costa. The females are similar, but have short palps that are either held slightly erect or project forward. This species is most reliably identified by genitalic characters.

DISTRIBUTION: Hasbrouck (1964) found this species to be widespread in the central and eastern United States, with the range extending from Missouri and Arkansas eastward to Massachusetts and Florida. As of 2020, our records extend from the western Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont to the lower elevations in the mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults fly from April through September in areas outside of North Carolina, with a seasonal peak in June and July. As of 2020, our records extend from May through September, with most in June.

HABITAT: The larval hosts are undocumented and it is uncertain if this species is dependent on specific hosts to complete the life cycle.

FOOD: The hosts are unknown. Many *Acrolophus* live in underground burrows and feed on the roots and young shoots of grasses and herbs. However, there are exceptions and the life history of the larval stage remains undocumented. Heppner (2007) reports grasses are used as hosts, but it is unclear if this is based on actual observation or just inferred based on the hosts of other *Acrolophus* species.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Both the males and females 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: We currently do not have sufficient information on the distribution, abundance, and habitat requirements of this species to assess its conservation status.