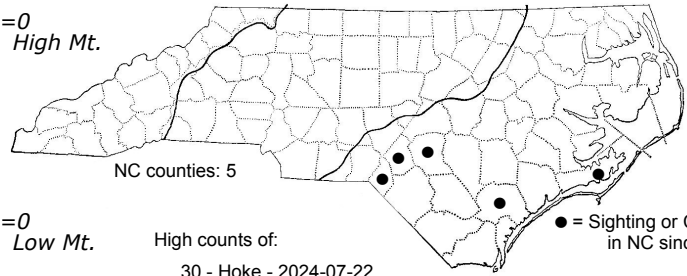
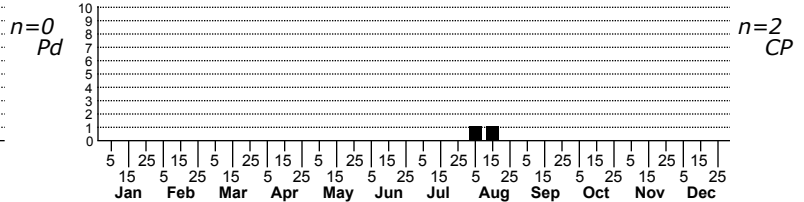


Phereoeca uterella Household Casebearer Moth



Status	Rank
NC	US
NC	Global



FAMILY: Tineidae SUBFAMILY: Tineinae TRIBE: [Tineini]
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based primarily on that of Walsingham (1897). The head, tuft and thorax are light fawn-colored. The antenna is filiform and brown, and about as long as the wings. The labial palp is short and brown. The forewing ground color is yellowish fawn, with minute fuscous speckling throughout. The forewing has several blackish blotches or spots. These include a costal spot near the base that is partly connected with a spot lying obliquely beneath it on the fold, two spots at the middle of the wing with the dorsal one slightly more anterior, and a larger rectangular spot on the costal half at around two-thirds. The cilia are fawn-gray. The hindwing is pale gray with the fringe yellowish gray, while the abdomen is yellowish gray. The Legs are yellowish gray and the tarsi has obscure darker blotches. Aiello (1979) noted that the females are grayer than the males, and are slightly larger with more prominent spotting. The antennae are held back over the body and vibrated constantly. *Niditinea fuscella* is superficially similar but has less defined spotting and shorter antennae that do not reach the wing tips.

DISTRIBUTION: *Phereoeca uterella* is thought to be native to Australia or Africa, but is now found worldwide in association with human dwellings and human habitation. It seems to do best in hot, humid environments where the larvae are less vulnerable to desiccation when foraging. Populations appear to be restricted to southern latitudes in the US where they are common in Florida, the Gulf Coast region, and southern California. As of 2020, we have only two records for North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Local populations are multivoltine and have been found in the US during every month of the year. In warm locales such as southern Florida there are probably three or four broods per year, but undoubtedly fewer at more northern latitudes. As of 2020, our two records are from August and September.

HABITAT: This species is strongly associated with homes and outbuildings where the larvae are commonly seen on or near spider webs in garages or other buildings. They frequently crawl on exterior and interior walls where they can sometimes become household pests (Hetrick, 1957).

FOOD: The larvae are detritus-feeders and scavengers and do not require a specific plant host (Heppner, 2007). In North Carolina, we have records of case-bearing larvae feeding on cat food and other household detritus.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Most records are based on observations of larvae within their distinctive cases. The adults appears to only occasionally visit lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNA

STATE PROTECTION: Has no legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: This is an exotic species that can sometimes become a household pest and does not merit protection.