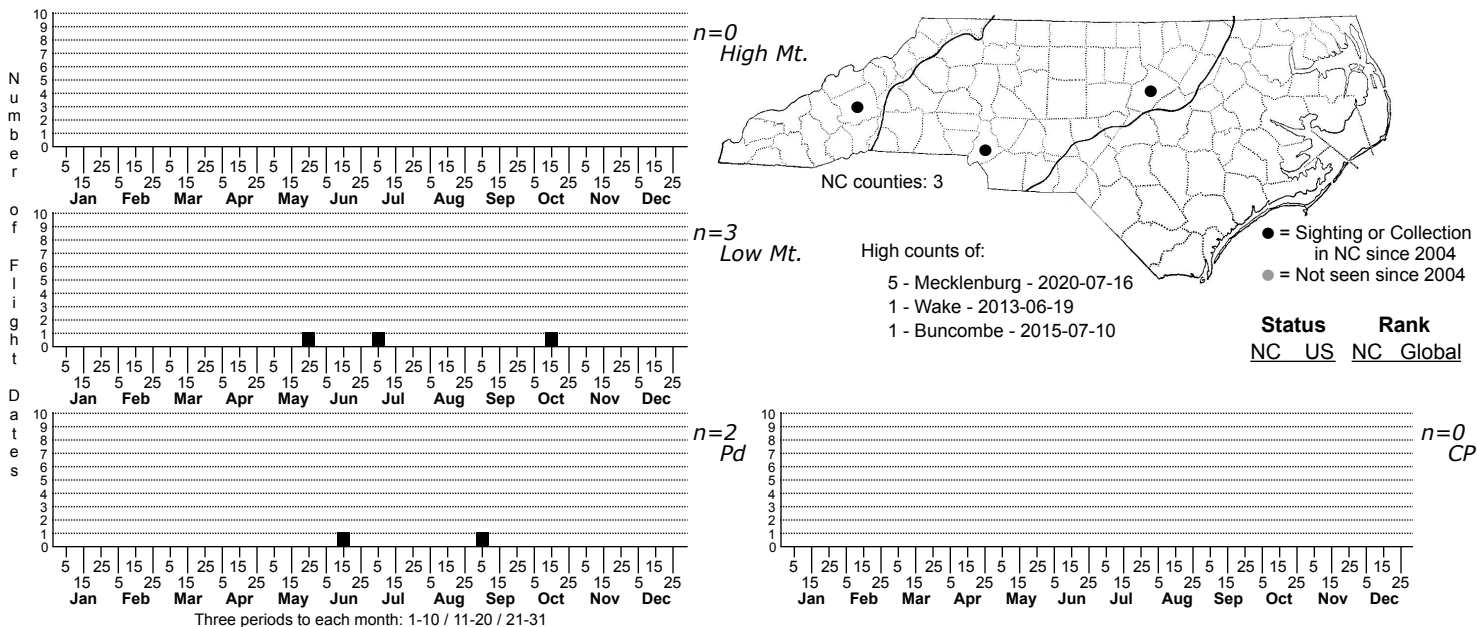


*Tinea pellionella* complex No common name



FAMILY: Tineidae SUBFAMILY: Tineinae TRIBE: [Tineini]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The *T. pellionella* species complex consists of 11 species of case-making clothes moths that are found worldwide (Robinson, 1979). The members of the complex are indistinguishable based on external morphology and can only be recognized by genitalia. They all are native to the Old World, but many have been spread around the world by humans where they feed on clothing, carpeting, fur, hair, skin, bird feathers and other sources of keratin. At least three members of the complex have been introduced to North America (*T. translucens*; *T. dubiella*; *T. pellionella*), and are treated here as members of the *T. pellionella* complex.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Robinson (1979)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Robinson (1979)

ID COMMENTS: Members of the *Tinea pellionella* complex are rather drab species. The head and tuft vary from rusty brown to tannish brown or dull yellowish and are often lighter than the forewings (Forbes, 1923). The antenna and palps is dark gray to blackish. The forewing, cilia, and legs are uniformly brown to yellowish brown. Three dark spots are often present that include a matched pair at about one-half the wing length, and a third at about four-fifths that is near the middle. In many specimens only the spot nearer to the inner margin is present at one-half.

DISTRIBUTION: Members of this group have been spread worldwide by humans as a result of the fur trade and global shipment of wool-based clothing. *Tinea pellionella* and its close relatives occur primarily in Nearctic and Palearctic regions, as well as Australia and New Zealand. As of 2020, we have only a few records for the state from the Piedmont and lower mountains. This species is a common pest throughout the state and often goes unreported by naturalists.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults have been observed during every month of the year in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak from April through August. As of 2020, our records extend from June to October.

HABITAT: Characteristically found in close association with humans.

FOOD: The larvae are detritus feeders and do not have specific plant hosts.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults occasionally appear at lights, but damaged carpeting or clothing often is packed with larval cases.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNA

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This is a group of exotic pests that does not warrant protection.