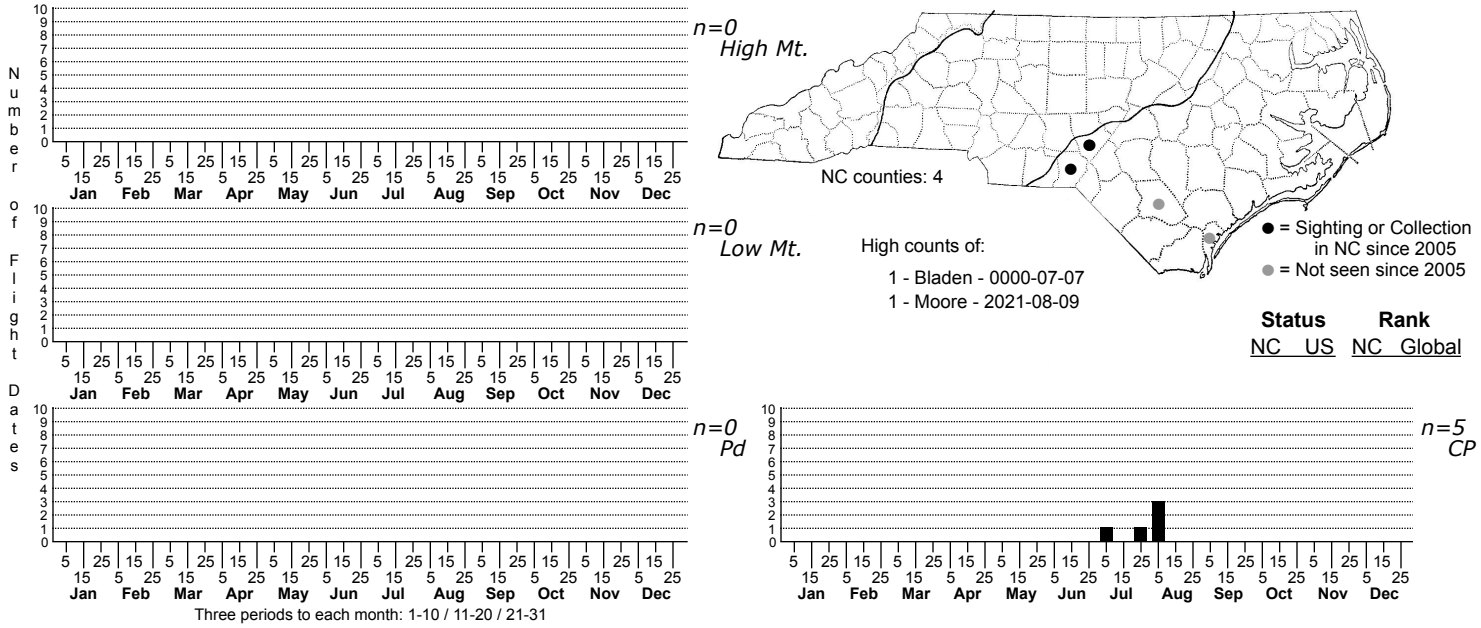
Basicladus celibata No common name



FAMILY: Psychidae SUBFAMILY: Psychinae TRIBE: [Psychini]
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: The family Psychidae contains as many as 1,350 species that are found worldwide. The females of many species are flightless, and the larvae of all species live in constructed cases or bags, hence the name bagworms. Basicladus is a small genus with only two recognized species.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Jones, 1922; Davis 1964
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Jones, 1922

ID COMMENTS: The adult males resemble a smaller, slender version of B. tracyi. The following description is based on those of Jones (1922) and Davis (1964). Both the forewing and hindwing are very broad, evenly scaled, and brownish fuscous to brownish black. The apical angle and outer margin of both are strongly rounded, and the scales of the discal cell on the forewing are very slender and hairlike, with acute tips. The vestiture of the head, thorax and abdomen is light brown and composed of about equal numbers of brown and pale whitish hairs that are long and erect. The antenna has 23 to 24 segments, is broadly bipectinate, and gradually decreases in width to the apex. The pectinations arise basally from each segment, and the sensory hairs are erect, very slender, and approximately 4x the diameter of the pectination in length (Davis, 1964). The legs are unarmed and the forelegs are the longest. The males are very similar to B. tracyi, but smaller and more slender, with no overlap in size (wing expanse only 10-12.5 mm for B. celibatus versus 16-19 mm B. tracyi). The females have not been described, but presumably are grub-like in shape as described for B. tracyi.

DISTRIBUTION: Basicladus celibata is restricted to the southeastern US where it occurs from coastal North Carolina southward to Florida and westward to Louisiana and Arkansas. As of 2020, our records are all from the extreme southeastern part of the state.

FLIGHT COMMENT: This species appears to be univoltine with most adults flying in May and June. As of 2020, our one specimen is from early July.

HABITAT: The preferred habitats are poorly documented.

FOOD: There is a record of larvae feeding on Northern Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum) (Robinson et al., 2023). Davis (1964) surmised that the larvae are polyphagous like most psychids and feed low-growing plants. Robinson et al. (2023) also list pine and oak, but we are unsure of the source of these records.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults appear to only occasionally visit lights. Larvae have been found crawling up trees and other vegetation in early summer shortly before pupating, so this may be a productive way to locate local populations.

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 is a seemingly uncommon to rare species throughout most of its range.