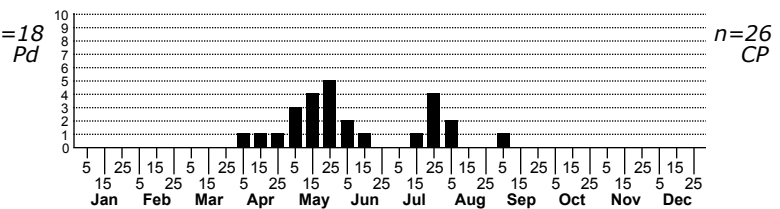
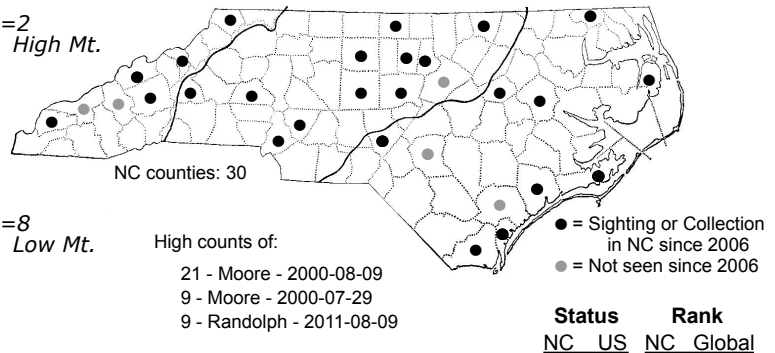
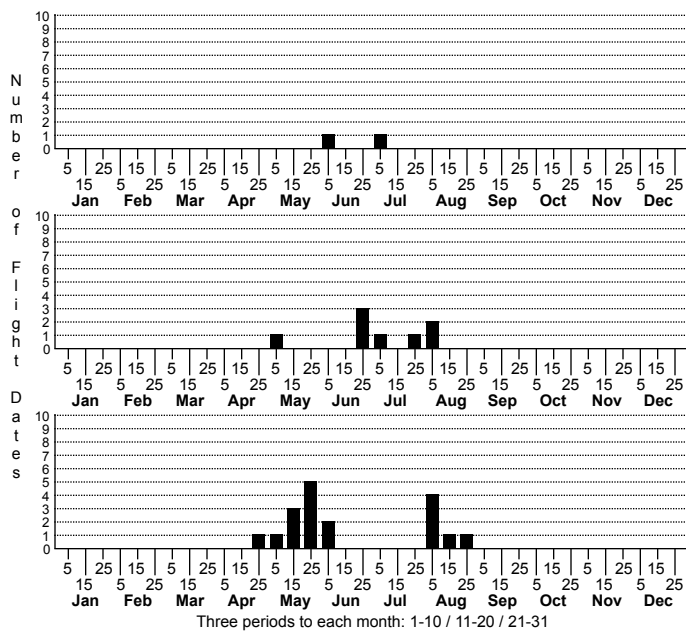


# *Harrisina americana* Grapeleaf Skeletonizer Moth



FAMILY: Zygaenidae SUBFAMILY: TRIBE:  
TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Jones (1909)

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctive species due to its color patterning, wing shape and posture. The entire moth is uniformly black except for a contrastingly orange collar. Both the males and females have pectinate antennae, with those of the male being plumose. The forewings are elongated and fringed on the inner margin, and usually held out at an angle when an individual is at rest. The abdomen is expanded towards the tip and has a caudal tuft of scales.

*Harrisina americana* is often confused with *Acoloitus falsarius*, but the latter is smaller, has an orange collar that is interrupted with black in the middle, lacks an expanded abdomen tip with a prominent scale tuft, and typically rest with the wings held close to the body. *Harrisina americana* also resembles *Cisseps fulvicollis*, but this species has sooty brown forewings and lacks an expanded abdomen tip with a prominent scale tuft. It has orange coloration on the collar like *H. americana*, but also has additional orange coloration on the back of the head, and often as a thin line along the basal portion of the costa. *Ctenucha virginica* is another species that is similar in coloration, but is much larger, has broader wings, and has an iridescent blue thorax. It has not yet been observed south of Virginia, but may eventually be found in North Carolina.

DISTRIBUTION: *Harrisina americana* is found throughout much of the eastern and southwestern US and adjoining portions of Canada (Manitoba; Ontario; Quebec; New Brunswick). In the US the range extends from New Hampshire and Vermont southward to southern Florida, and westward to Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota. Populations tend to be much more scattered west of the western limits of the Eastern Deciduous Forest. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from February through November in the southernmost populations and mostly from April through September farther north. Local populations appear to have from one to three generations per year, with two generations being the norm throughout most of the range. As of 2023, our records span from early April through early August. Populations in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain appear to produce two broods per year, with only one brood produced in the Blue Ridge.

HABITAT: Local populations are commonly found in hardwood and mixed pine-hardwood forests, and well as in sunny habitats such as river banks, forest margins, roadways, fields, utility corridors and fencerows. They can be a minor pest in vineyards and home gardens with grapes.

FOOD: The larvae primarily feed on members of the Vitaceae (Wagner, 2005; Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008; Beadle & Leckie, 2012), including Muscadine (*Muscadinia rotundifolia*), Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), Fox Grape (*Vitis labrusca*) and other native grapes, and cultivated grapes (*V. vinifera*). Other questionable hosts that have been reported and are likely very rarely used (if at all) include English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). In North Carolina, we have records for larvae on Virginia Creeper and Muscadine.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and are often observed during the day resting on vegetation or nectaring on flowers. The boldly marked larvae are easy to spots on grape leaves.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S5

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

COMMENTS: This species is widespread and common in North Carolina and appears to be secure.