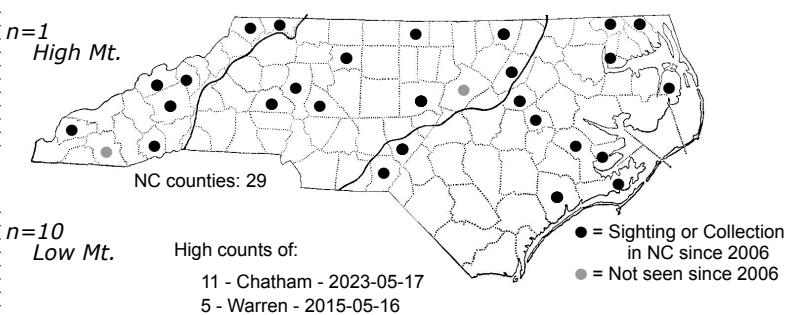
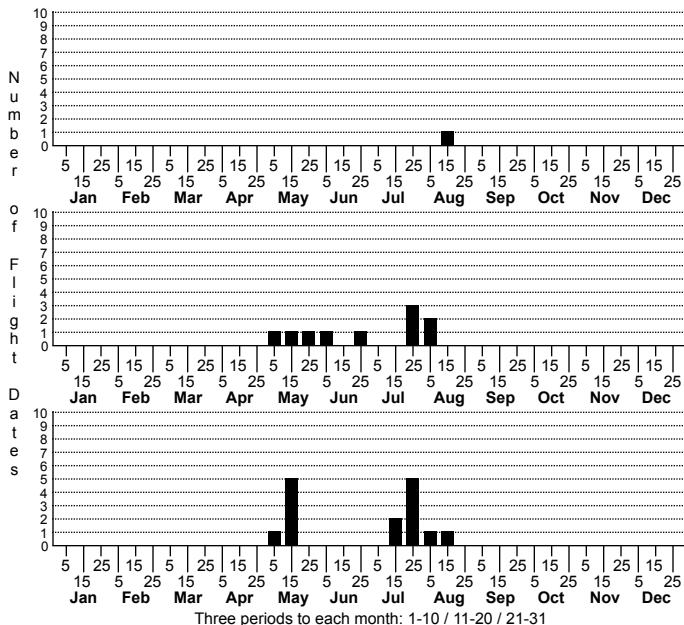


# *Acoloithus falsarius* Clemens' False Skeletonizer Moth



FAMILY: Zygaenidae SUBFAMILY: TRIBE:  
TAXONOMIC COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: In this species the entire moth is uniformly black except for a contrastingly orange collar that is interrupted with black scales in the middle. Both the males and females have pectinate antennae and the forewings are normally held together when an individual is resting. The abdomen is short and broad, and lacks scale tufts at the tip.

*Acoloithus falsarius* is often confused with *Harrisina americana*, but the latter is larger, has an orange collar that is complete, has an expanded abdomen tip with a prominent scale tuft, and typically rest with the wings held out at an angle. *Acoloithus falsarius* also resembles *Cisseps fulvicollis*, but the latter has sooty brown forewings, an orange collar that is complete, and additional orange coloration on the back of the head and 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: *Acoloithus falsarius* is found throughout most of the eastern US and in adjoining areas of southern Ontario and Quebec. In the US the range extends from New Hampshire and Vermont southward to southern Florida and westward to central Texas, eastern Oklahoma, Missouri, eastern Kansas, eastern Nebraska, Illinois and Michigan. Scattered populations also occur in western Texas and northern Mexico. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina except at the higher elevations of the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly from March through November in the southernmost areas of the range such as the Florida and Texas, and generally from April through September elsewhere. Populations in North Carolina appear to be bivoltine, with adults first flying in April and May and then again in July through early August.

HABITAT: Local populations are commonly found in settings that support native grapes such as hardwood and mixed pine-hardwood forests, river banks, forest edges, roadways, fields, utility corridors, fencerows and residential areas.

FOOD: The larvae feed on members of the Vitaceae (Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008), including peppervines (*Ampelopsis*), Muscadine (*Muscadina rotundifolia*) and other native grapes (*Vitis* spp.). There are iNaturalist records of larvae on grape in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are mildly attracted to lights, but are more often seen during the day either resting on vegetation or nectaring on flowering plants.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S4

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

COMMENTS: Populations are widespread within North Carolina, but locally restricted due to their dependence of native grapes.