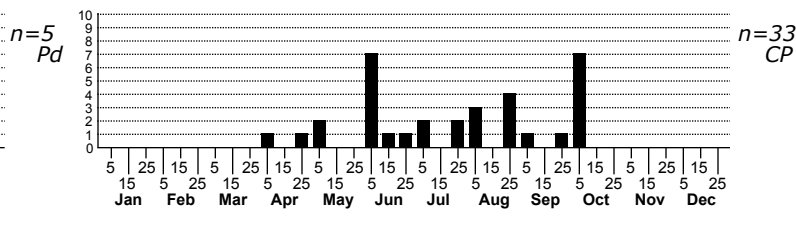
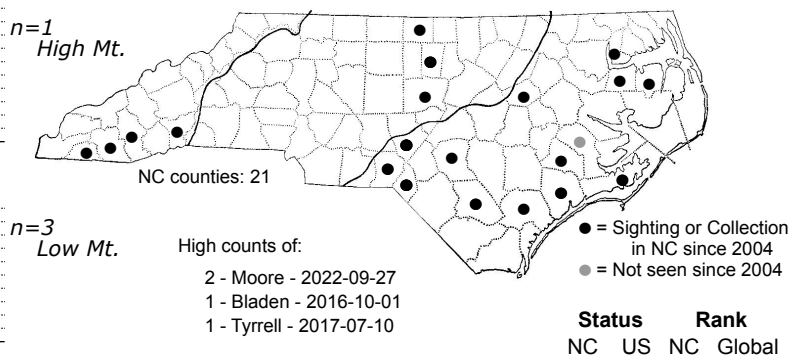
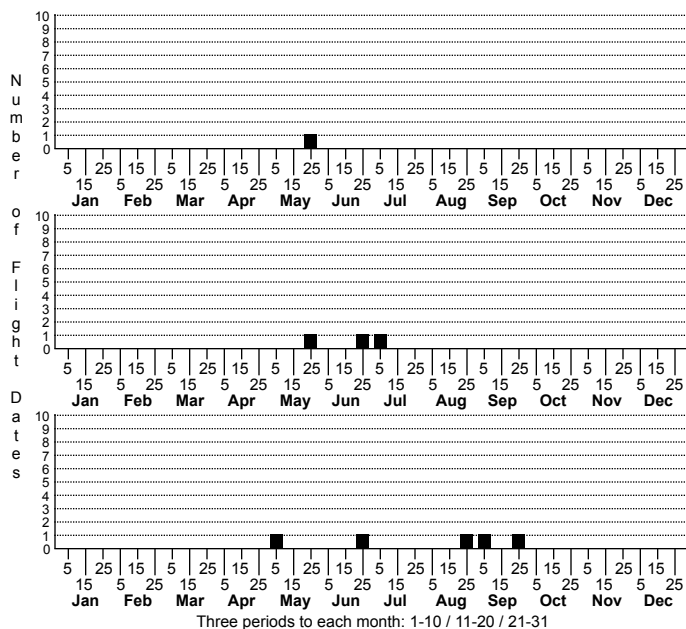


# *Elophila icciusalis* Pondside Pyralid Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Acentropinae TRIBE: Nymphulini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Elophila* contains nearly 50 described species that occur on most continents worldwide. Nine species occur in North America -- including seven in North Carolina -- and all have aquatic larvae that feed on floating and submerged plants. The larvae live in cases that are constructed from cut-out portions of leaves or leaf fragments, with pupation occurring within the case. The larvae are gill-less and appear to obtain oxygen by storing air in their cases.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1923); Munroe (1972)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Welch (1916); Forbes (1923)

ID COMMENTS: *Elophila icciusalis* is a boldly marked species that varies substantially in size and markings across its range. The abdomen has white bands that alternate with yellowish to light brown bands. Specimens typically have a mainly yellow or light-brown ground color on both the forewing and hindwing that is overlain with numerous silvery white patches and bars, many of which are lined on one margin with black (Forbes, 1923; Munroe, 1972). Some of the more distinctive marks on the forewing include 1) an outwardly oblique, black line followed by a white triangle near the middle of the costa, 2) a large white spot near the middle of the inner margin that is rather crisply encircled or nearly encircled with black, 3) a wavy or W-shaped white mark that is margined outwardly with black that extends from the costa at about three-fourths inward to the middle of the wing, and 4) a white subterminal line that is strongly irregular or undulating and usually edged outwardly with black, at least towards the apex.

The hindwing is generally similar, but has a white basal area and a broad median white band that is bordered both basally and distally by a black line. The basal black line is straight and oblique, while the distal line is strongly sinuate and is sometimes followed by a second, more diffuse, parallel black band. The fringe on both the forewing and hindwing is checkered to varying degrees with white, fuscous and yellow or buff (Munroe, 1972). *Elophila icciusalis* is generally similar to *E. faulalis*, but the latter has marks that are less distinct and wings that are often heavily dusted with fuscous on the distal half.

DISTRIBUTION: *Elophila icciusalis* is widely distributed across eastern North America, and also occurs in the western US from California northward to Washington. It occurs throughout southern Canada from British Columbia eastward to Prince Edward Island, and in the eastern US from Maine southward to southern Florida, and westward to eastern Texas, eastern Oklahoma, eastern Missouri, western Tennessee, western Kentucky, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota. An apparent disjunct group is present in northern Nebraska. As of 2023, we have scattered records from the Coastal Plain, eastern Piedmont, and lower valleys of the southwestern Blue Ridge. This species is generally most common in the Coastal Plain where suitable habitats are more prevalent.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed during almost every month of the year in Florida, and mostly from April through September farther north. As of 2023, our records extend from late April through early October. Populations in the Coastal Plain have an extensive flight period that is consistent with two or more overlapping generations per year.

HABITAT: Local populations are found in and around vegetated ponds and other standing water habitats that support the aquatic larvae.

FOOD: The larvae feed on several aquatic plants (Forbes, 1910 and 1923; Welch, 1916; Berg (1950); McGaha, 1954; Covell, 1984; Scholtens 1996). The reported hosts include Water-shield (*Brasenia schreberi*), aquatic sedges (*Carex*), duckweeds (*Lemna* and *Spirodela*), Water Clover (*Marsilia quadrifolia*), Buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Floating Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) and American Eelgrass (*Vallisneria spiralis*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and are often seen during the day perched on vegetation, nectaring on flowers, or flying over or along the margins of vegetated ponds and other aquatic sites.

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: This species appears to be somewhat common within the state, but populations are restricted to sites where vegetated standing-water habitats are present.