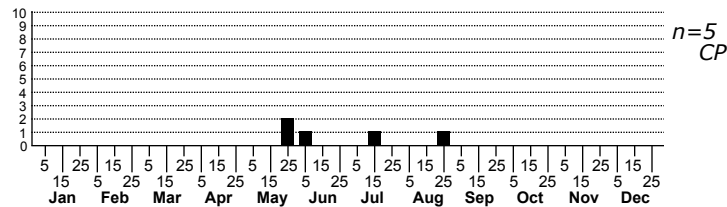
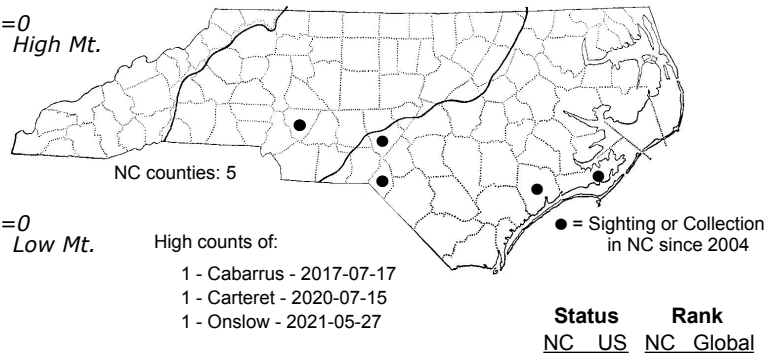
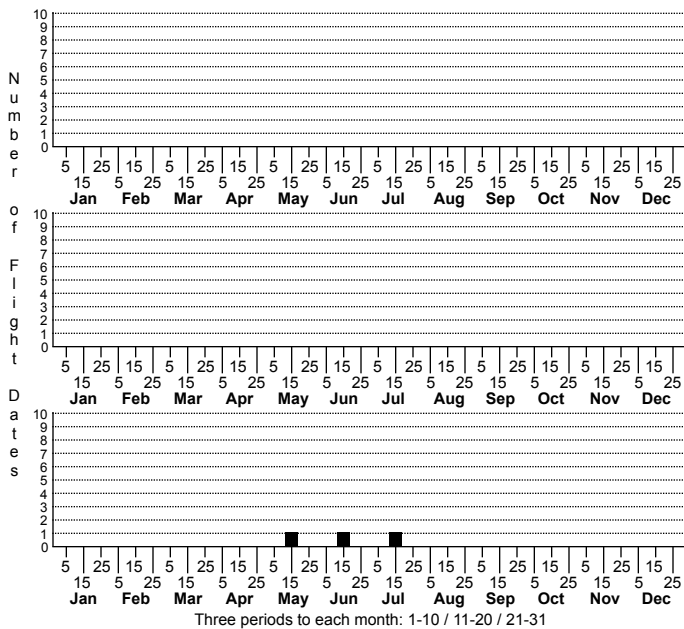


Elophila atlantica No common name



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:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Munroe (1972)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Munroe (1972)

ID COMMENTS: As with other members of the genus, the wings are rounded and the labial palps are upturned and reach the middle or dorsal edge of the frons. The following description is based mostly on that of Munroe (1972) based on specimens from Nova Scotia. The head and palps are pale grayish buff and weakly tinged with fuscous, while the antennae are dark fuscous. The forewings are of moderate width. The termen of the male is moderately oblique, while that of the female is more strongly oblique. The forewing is light grayish buff in the male and paler in the female. The basal area is weakly suffused with brownish fuscous. Beyond this there is a wide, pale, obtusely angled antemedial band that is followed by the narrow, brownish-fuscous medial area. There is a white, fuscous-bordered discocellular lunule that is touched by the oblique, irregularly sinuous, whitish-gray postmedial line. The distal part of the wing is a little paler than the medial part in the male, but much paler in the female. In both sexes there is a dark subapical patch on the costa and a dark subterminal band. These are darker and wider in the male than in the female. There is a somewhat irregular and interrupted row of whitish subterminal spots. The fringe is brownish fuscous with weak darker checkering. The hindwing is grayish fuscous in the male and gray with fuscous dusting in the female. Both sexes have weakly sinuous whitish-gray antemedial lines that bound a slightly darker medial area.

According to Munroe (1972), this species is generally similar to *Elophila oblitalis*, but tends to have darker antemedial and subterminal zones on the forewing and a complete pale-gray postmedial line on both the forewing and hindwing. His conclusions were based on a very limited number of specimens from Nova Scotia. Specimens of *E. atlantica* have since been collected at various sites to as far south as southern Florida (BOLD) and show substantial variation in wing shading (often as dark and brownish as typical *E. oblitalis*) and the degree of development of the PM lines (often fragmented or incomplete on many specimens). The presence of a complete or fragmented PM line on the hindwing seems to be one of the most useful characters for distinguishing this species from *E. oblitalis*. Some specimens may require DNA barcoding or genitalia for identification.

DISTRIBUTION: Munroe (1972) only reported this species from Nova Scotia, but it is now known to occur along coastal regions from Maine southward to Florida. As of 2023, we have a few scattered records from the Coastal Plain, with one site record (barcoded) from the Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Specimens in Florida have been found in March through June (BOLD). Individuals in more northern populations presumably breed somewhat later in the year. As of 2023, our limited records range from mid-May to mid-July. There are also two isolated records for August 10 in Maryland and October 5 in Georgia (BOLD).

HABITAT: The habitats are poorly documented, but the larvae presumably live in vegetated aquatic habitats as do other members of the genus.

FOOD: The host plants are undocumented.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults occasionally visit lights. Aspects of the larval life history are undocumented and we encourage naturalists to obtain information on the larval ecology and habitat use.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S2-S4]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This species appears to be rather uncommon throughout its range except for Florida. We need more detailed information on habitat requirements, distribution and abundance within the state before we can accurately assess its conservation status.