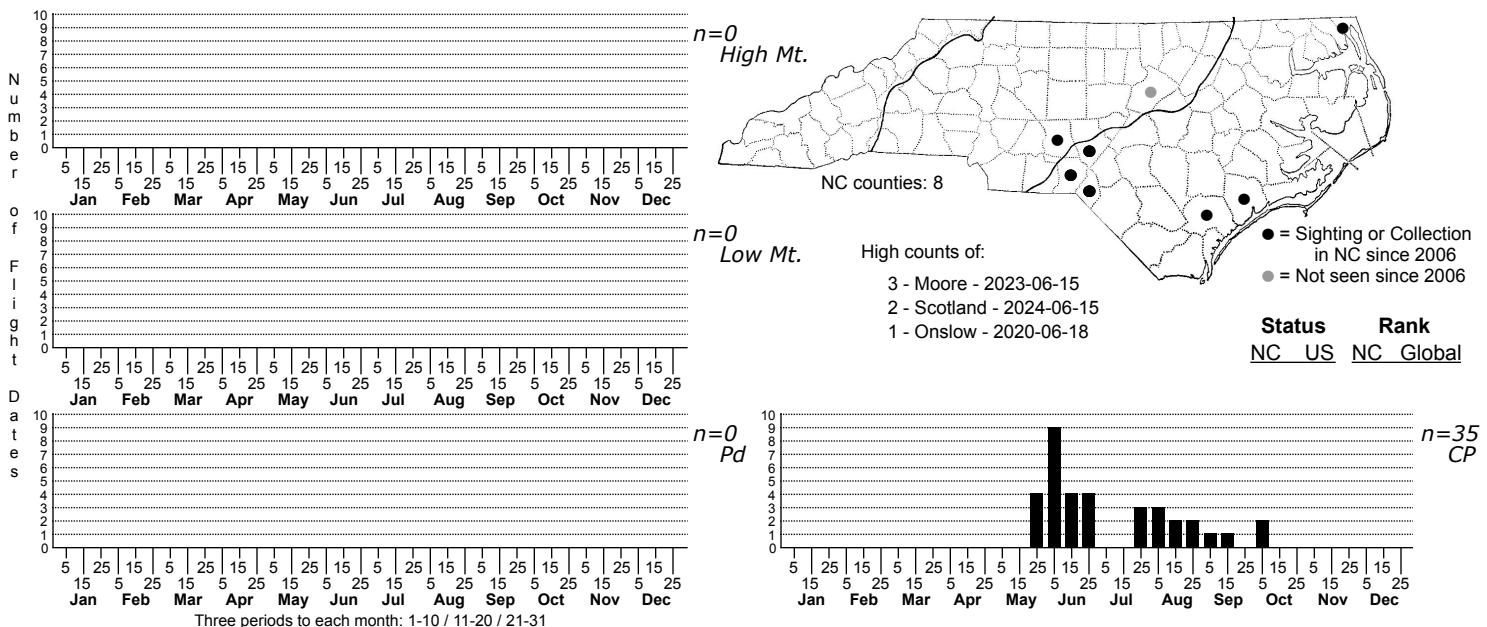


Parapoynx maculalis Polymorphic Pondweed Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Acentropinae TRIBE: Nymphulini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Parapoynx* contains around 60 described species with a nearly worldwide distribution. Seven species occur in North America, with the center of distribution being eastern North America. North Carolina has four species. The larvae are aquatic feeders and can be recognized by the presence of branched gills on all body segments except the prothorax.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1910); Welch (1916)

ID COMMENTS: This species is sexual dimorphic and shows significant variation among members of the same sex (Forbes, 1923; Munroe, 1972). The forewing ground color of the males is white and is marked with dark gray to dark brown diffuse spots and dusting. The darker marks include a small diffuse basal spot near the middle of the wing at about one-fifth the distance from the wing base to the apex, a similar but larger spot just before one-half the distance, a relatively large rectangular spot on the costal at around three-fourths, and a more diffuse blotch that often touches the costal spot, and is more dorsal and posterior to it. The spots can vary from being bold and well-formed to rather faint. A light brown and faint subterminal band is usually evident that is followed by a thin terminal line on the termen, along with fine longitudinal streaking in the terminal area. The hindwing is mostly white, with light fuscous dusting sometimes evident near the apex and inner angle. The female forewing is typically uniformly mouse gray and the hindwing white. On rare occasions males have been found with the forewings uniformly dark like those of the females. In addition, females are more commonly found that have traces of dark pattern on the dark ground color of the forewings.

DISTRIBUTION: *Parapoynx maculalis* is found in southern Canada from British Columbia eastward to Prince Edward Island. Its range in the US is restricted to sites where water lilies or pond lilies abound, and includes a broad swath from the New England states westward through the Great Lakes region to Minnesota and eastern North Dakota. It also occurs from the New England states southward along the Atlantic Coastal Plain to southern Florida, and westward and northward in the southeastern Coastal Plain to eastern Texas, Arkansas, western Tennessee, western Kentucky and southern Illinois. As of 2023, all of our records are from the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly year-round in Florida where populations are presumably multivoltine. The flight season becomes progressively shorter as one moves north, with individuals in the northern part of the range typically fly from May through September. As of 2023, our records extend from early June through early October. Our limited data suggest that there are at least two generations per year in North Carolina.

HABITAT: Local populations are mostly restricted to aquatic sites with water lilies and pond lilies.

FOOD: The larvae feed on members of the Nymphaeaceae (Forbes, 1910; Welch, 1916; McGaha, 1952, 1954; Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2010). The reported host include Water-shield (*Brasenia schreberi*), lotuses (*Nelumbo*), Broadleaf Pond-lily (*Nuphar advena*), Variegated Yellow Pond-Lily (*N. variegata*), and Fragrant Water-lily (*Nymphaea odorata*). The latter three species are the primary hosts (McGaha, 1952, 1954; Welch, 1916).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and can be flushed from the margins of wetlands during the day. The larvae are often common on the undersides of water lilies and pond lilies.

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 rather uncommon in North Carolina and localized due to its aquatic host species.