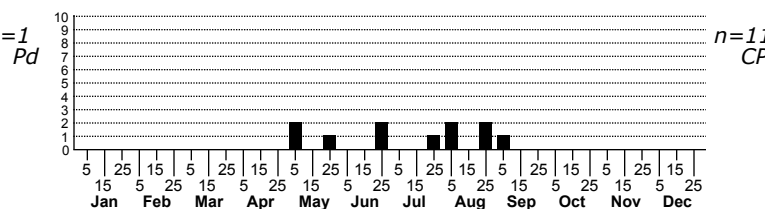
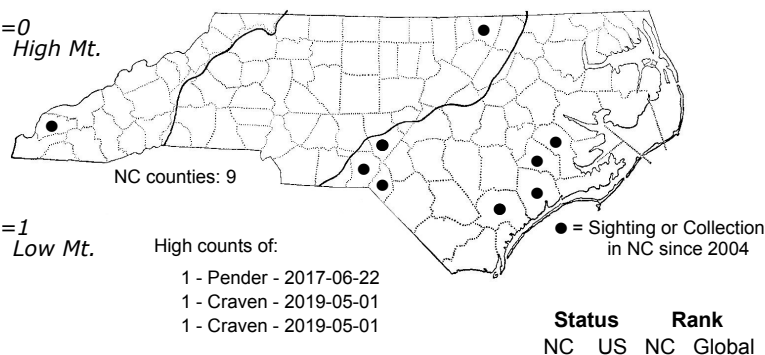
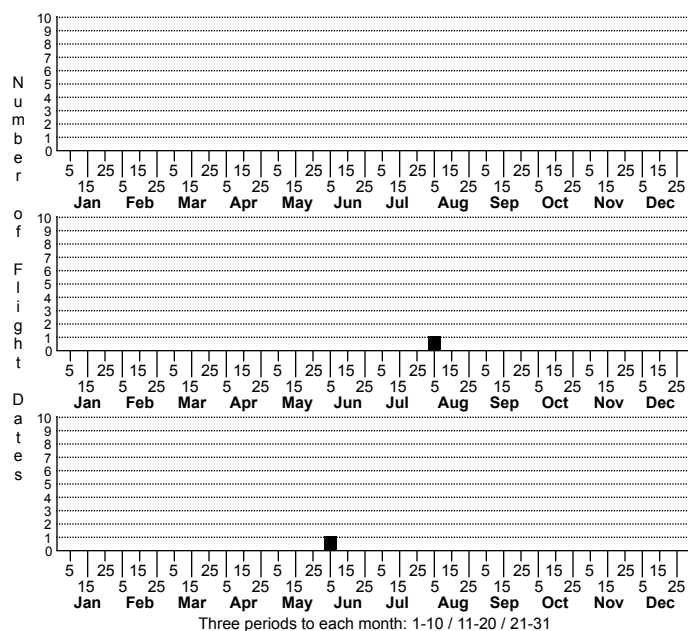


# Parapoynx obscuralis Obscure Pondweed Moth



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: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Munroe (1972a)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Hart (895) Berg (1950)

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctive species that often rests with the forewings spread to reveal a broad orange terminal band on the hindwing that is preceded by a prominent, broad, blackish band. The following description is based in part on that of Dyer (1906). The palps, head and thorax are brown to blackish-brown. The ground color of the forewing is white, but is shaded with varying degrees of brown to blackish-brown dusting that may mask most of the white. Males generally tend to be less dusted and more whitish than the females. The most conspicuous mark is a white postmedial line at about four-fifths the wing length that projects roughly perpendicular from the costa, then bends inwardly at the fold towards the inner margin. The line typically terminates near the middle of the wing and is thicker in males. The PM line is usually followed by a broad, dark shade that extends to the termen (sometimes masked in dark individuals). A large, diffuse blackish spot is present about half way along the inner margin. Two small blackish spots are also usually evident -- one near the middle of the wing at around one-fourth -- and another at around two-thirds below the costa. A thin blackish terminal line is present below the fringe. The ground color of the hindwing is white and is overlain with a conspicuous broad orange terminal band that is very thinly margined with black. This is followed inwardly by a broad blackish band with diffuse margins, and then by a much thinner blackish band at around two-thirds the wing length. This species is easy to identify when the forewings are spread, but can be more challenging when the forewings are closed. *Parapoynx seminealis* is somewhat similar, but has bold orange and blackish banding on both the hindwing and forewing.

DISTRIBUTION: *Parapoynx obscuralis* is widespread across much of the eastern US and adjoining areas of extreme southern Canada (Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia). In the US the range extends from Maine westward to Minnesota, and southward to east-central Texas, the Gulf Coast states, and southern Florida. As of 2023, most of our records are from the Coastal Plain, with one isolated record from the Piedmont and Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Northern populations appear to be univoltine with the larvae overwintering in their cases and the adults mostly flying from June through September. Adults have been observed in Florida year-round, with local populations likely producing two or more broods per year. As of 2023 our records extend from early May through early September.

HABITAT: Local populations are generally associated with aquatic habitats where the larvae live. They use both vegetated sluggish habitats in streams and rivers, and standing-water habitats with aquatic vegetation.

FOOD: The larvae feed on a variety of aquatic plants (Hart, 1895; Dyers, 1906; Berg, 1950; Habeck, 1974; Hutchinson et al., 2015), including American Eelgrass (*Vallisneria spiralis*), Broadleaf Pond-lily (*Nuphar advena*), and several species of pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.; Berg, 1950). Hutchinson (2015) reported that the larvae fed rather heavily on several species that were being cultured in ponds, greenhouse tanks, and outdoor raceways in Texas, including Creeping Primrose-willow (*Ludwigia repens*), Broadleaf Pond-lily, Delta Arrowhead (*Sagittaria platyphylla*) and Texas Wild Rice (*Zizania texana*). Habeck (1974) listed additional species for Florida, including Common Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*) and a smartweed (*Polygonum* sp.).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found in aquatic habitats. Rearing adults is recommended since there are several other species of case-building crambids that use similar habitats.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S3-S4]

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

COMMENTS: Populations appear to be locally common where suitable habitats and host plants are present.