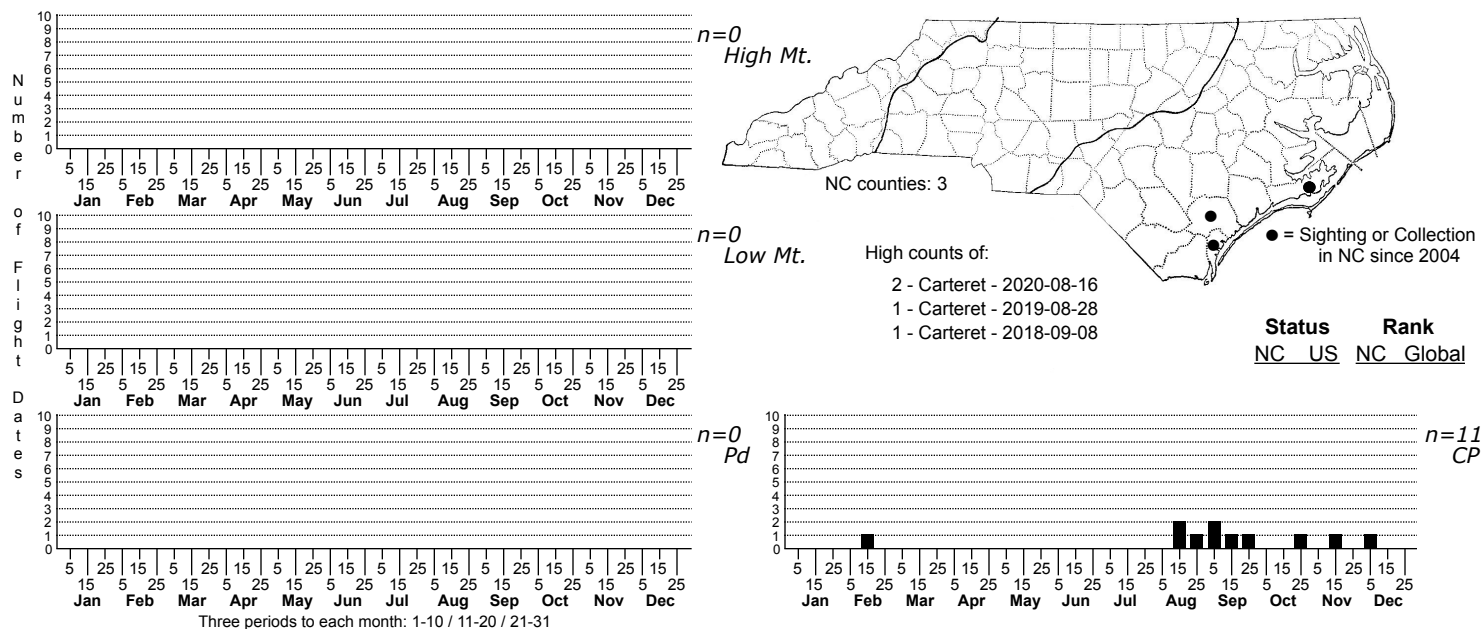


Lineodes fontella Eastern Lineodes Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Pyraustinae TRIBE: Spilomelini
 TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Walsingham (1913)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Hayden et al., 2013

ID COMMENTS: This is a distinctive moth that has long legs, long antennae, narrow wings, and a complex and distinctive pattern on the apical half of the wing. Individuals often rest with their abdomen curled upward well above the wings. The forewing is suffused with fawn-brown that phases into dark brown or brownish-black in the more conspicuous markings, such as the dark patch long the inner margin at two-thirds the wing length. There are five small dark fuscous spots on the costa — one near the base, one at one-third, and a group of three on the outer third (Walsingham, 1913). The antemedial and postmedial lines are very distinctive in being black with a thin, white margin on the outer side, and in having very convoluted paths with conspicuous loops along the way. The hindwing and cilia are pale grayish ochreous, with one or two short, transverse, dark lines below the end of the cell, and a dark line along the base of the cilia.

DISTRIBUTION: *Lineodes fontella* is widely distributed in the Neotropics, the Caribbean, and the southern U.S., and also occurs in a few counties in California (Hayden et al., 2013). In the Southeast, it is mostly found in coastal habitats from North Carolina southward to southern Florida, and westward to southern Texas. As of 2023, we have three site records and all are from coastal habitats.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed during every month of the year in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak typically in late-summer or early-fall. As of 2023, our records are from mid-August through early December, with the exception of one early season record from February.

HABITAT: All of our records come from dune grass/shrublands on barrier islands.

FOOD: The larvae appear to specialize on ground cherries (*Physalis* spp.; Hayden et al., 2013). The reported hosts include Cutleaf Ground-cherry (*P. angulata*), Mexican Ground-cherry (*P. philadelphica*), Downy Ground-cherry (*P. pubescens*), Sticky Ground-cherry (*P. viscosa*), and Walter’s Ground-cherry (= Dune Ground-cherry; *P. walteri*). Tracy Feldman reared an adult from Walter’s Ground-cherry, which is our only known host in North Carolina as of 2023.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found feeding on ground cherries. We need additional information on host use in North Carolina.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S1S3

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

COMMENTS: The likely host plant of this species, *Physalis walteri*, is state ranked as S3 and appears to be strongly confined to barrier island sand dunes and possibly other tidewater grass and shrublands. The moth has only been collected at three locations as of 2023, but can be expected to turn up at other coastal sites where the host plant occurs.