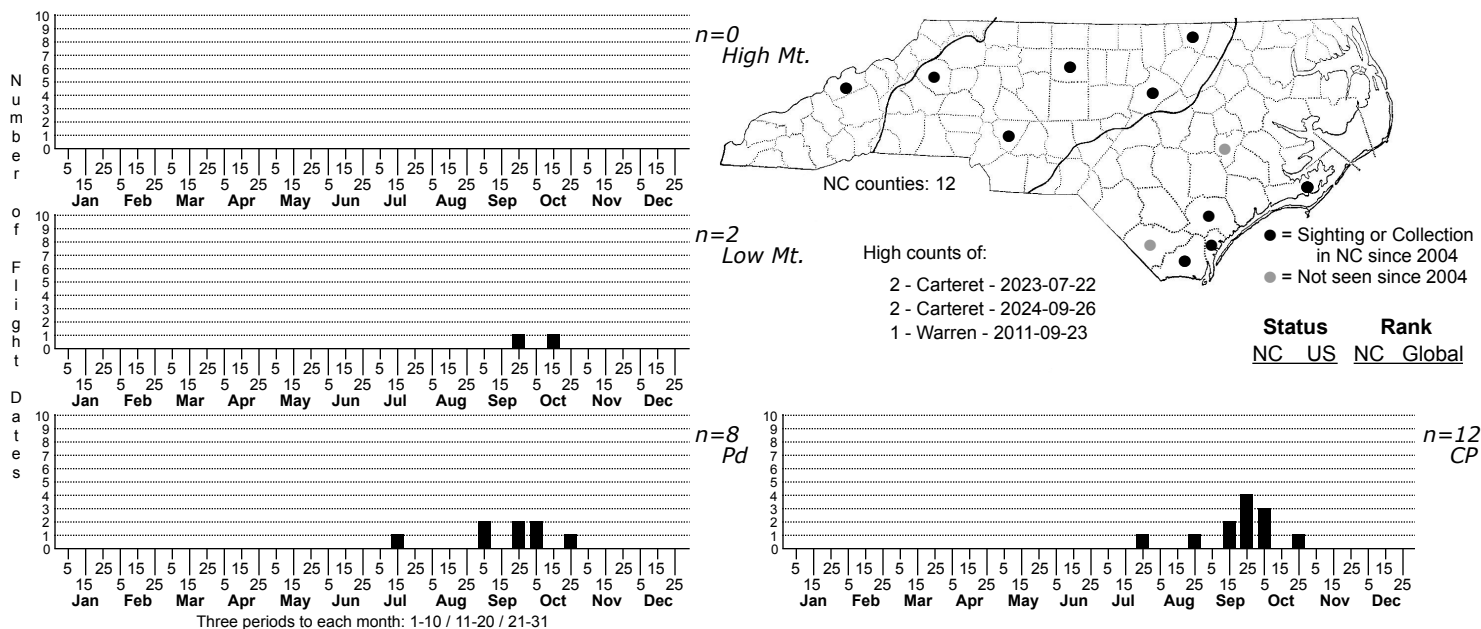


## *Diaphania hyalinata* Melonworm Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Pyraustinae TRIBE: Spilomelini  
 TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS:

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Capinera (2000a)

ID COMMENTS: This is a very distinctive moth that has silvery white and semitransparent wings that are edged with a thick band of brown along the costa and outer margin. The head and thorax are brown, while the abdomen is silvery white except for the brown tip. A prominent anal brush is present on both sexes.

DISTRIBUTION: Much like the Pickleworm Moth (*Diaphania nitidalis*), this is a tropical and subtropical species that cannot survive significant freezing winter temperatures. It overwinters successfully in southern Florida and southern Texas, then undergoes major dispersal events northward to invade much of the Southeast each summer. The moths commonly disperse as far as New England and the Great Lakes states, as well adjoining areas of southern Canada. It occurs statewide in North Carolina where it can be a pest on summer squash and other cucurbit vegetables (Capinera, 2000a).

FLIGHT COMMENT: This species is freeze-intolerant and only overwinters successfully in southern Florida and southern Texas. It undergoes long-distance dispersal events and typically reaches North Carolina and reproduces during the summer months. As of 2023, our records extends from mid-July through mid-October.

HABITAT: The Melonworm Moth is commonly found in agricultural fields and vegetable gardens where cucurbits are grown. They also are found where local patches of Wild Cucumber are found along edge habitats.

FOOD: The larvae specialize of members of the gourd family (Cucurbitaceae), including winter and summer squashes, cucumbers, watermelon, cantaloupe, and pumpkins (Capinera 2000a, Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2010). Wild Cucumber (*Echinocystis lobata*) is a native species that is also used in northern states. In North Carolina this species is restricted to a few counties in the northern Blue Ridge and appears to be an insignificant host. Robinson et al. (2010) list Threeseed Mercury (*Acalypha*; Euphorbiaceae) and *Ipomoea* (Convolvulaceae) as hosts, both of which could use additional verification.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to building lights and UV-lights and the larvae can be found attacking squash and other host plants.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S4]

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

COMMENTS: This species disperses every year from southern sites to North Carolina, but is not capable of establishing permanent breeding populations due to its freeze intolerance.