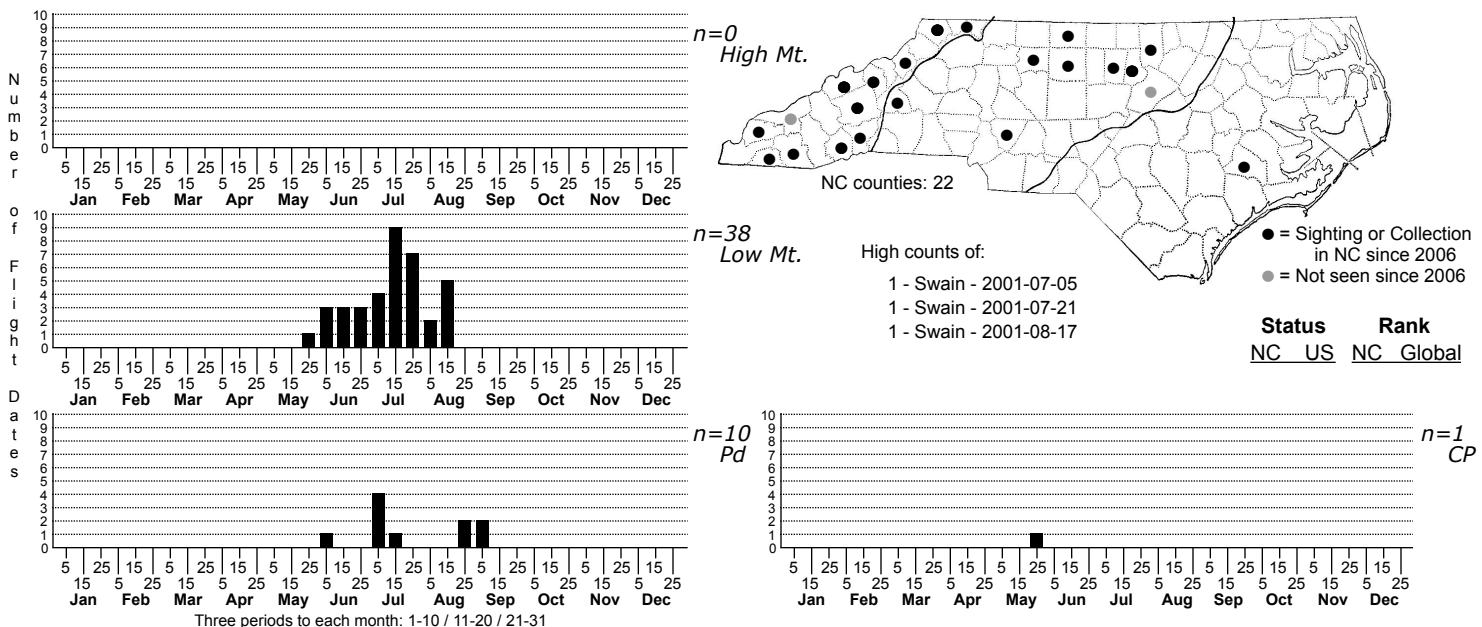


# *Polygrammodes flavidalis* Ironweed Root Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Pyraustinae TRIBE: Spilomelini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS:

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1923)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a rather distinctive species that has a pale-yellow ground color on the head, thorax, abdomen, and forewing. The forewing ground tends to shade more into a cream color towards the apex, and the costa is commonly shaded with reddish-brown on the basal two-thirds. The marks on the forewing are all well-defined and reddish brown, with blackish scales sometimes intermixed. The forewing of fresh specimens has two spots near the base, followed by a small orbicular spot below the costa and a reniform that is linear. The transverse lines are all irregularly wavy and consist of an antemedial that extends the full width of the wing at about one-fourth the wing length, a median that extends from the inner margin to near the reniform line, and the postmedial that is often broken, but usually extends the entire width of the wing from the costa to the tornus. The subterminal area has a linear sequence of six spots or u-shaped marks that parallel the termen and are sometimes connected to form a complete line. The fringe is concolorous with the adjoining ground color. The hindwing ground is concolorous with that of the forewing and has three transverse lines that resemble those on the forewing. The abdomen of unworn specimens also has pairs of reddish-brown spots on the basal segments.

DISTRIBUTION: <i>Polygrammodes flavidalis</i> is found in the eastern U.S. and Ontario from Massachusetts westward through the Great Lakes states to Minnesota, and southward to Oklahoma, eastern Texas, the Gulf Coast states, Florida and Georgia. As of 2023, our records are from the lower elevations in the Blue Ridge eastward to the eastern Piedmont, with one isolated record from the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from March through October in different areas of the range, with the peak season from June through August. As of 2023, our records extend from late-May through mid-August.

HABITAT: Local populations are generally associated with fragmented landscapes that support ironweeds. Typical habitats include mesic to wet areas of pastures, old fields, wildlife plots, roadways, powerline corridors, and streambanks.

FOOD: The larvae feed on the roots of ironweed, including Smooth Ironweed (<i>Vernonia fasciculata</i>) Forbes, 1923; Covell, 1984; Beadle and Leckie, 2012; Robinson et al., 2010; BugGuide).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

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 is patchily distributed across the landscape wherever the host species occur. It appears to be reasonably secure since the hosts are often associated with disturbed habitats.