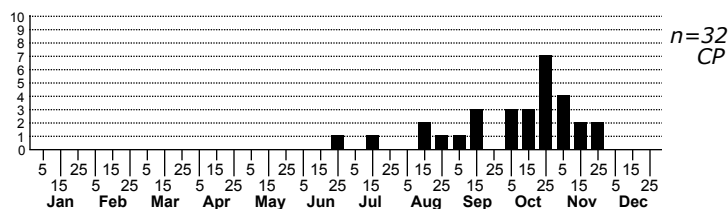
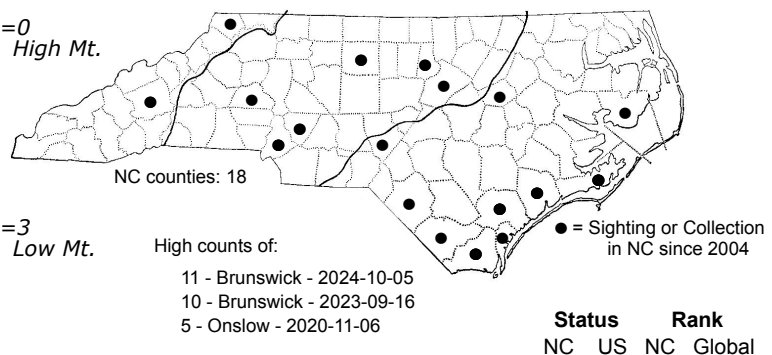
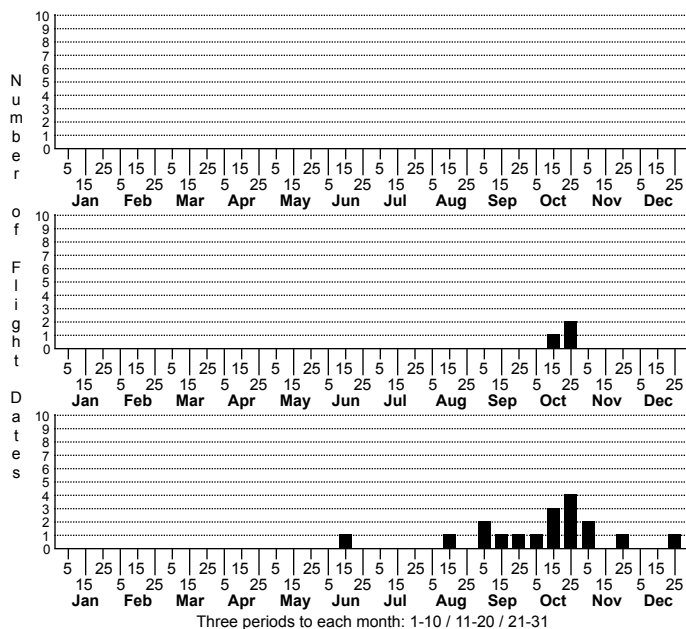


# *Herpetogramma phaeopteralis* Dusky Herpetogramma Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Spilomelinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: Over 20 species of *Herpetogramma* have been described from North America that are based mostly on external morphology. The most recent treatment consolidates these into only nine species (Solis, 2010) and all nine occur in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Solis (2010)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Tofangazi et al. (2014)

ID COMMENTS: This is the smallest of our *Herpetogramma* species, with a wing length of less than 11 mm and a wingspan of around 20 mm. The head, thorax, abdomen, and ground color of the forewing are medium-brown, and the wing marking are subdued relative to our other *Herpetogramma* species. The blackish orbicular spot is small and rounded, while the blackish reniform has a half-moon shape. The area between the orbicular and reniform is brown and lacks a pale or whitish patch as seen in some *Herpetogramma* species (Solis, 2010; Handfield and Handfield, 2021). The antemedial line is often obscure and mostly straight, but angles basally just before reaching the costa. The postmedial line extends inward from the costa at around three-fourths the wing length as a broadly wavy line, then angles inward to run parallel to the inner margin before sharply angling away from the reniform spot and running nearly perpendicular to the inner margin. The hindwing is concolorous with the forewing and has similar markings, except that it lacks the antemedial line and reniform spot. Both the forewing and hindwing lack conspicuous dark shading in the subterminal region. The fringe of both wings is slightly lighter than the ground color and has a narrow, dark line at the base that parallels a similar, but often scalloped or dashed, terminal line.

DISTRIBUTION: *Herpetogramma phaeopteralis* is found in southern South America northward to Central America, the Caribbean and the southeastern United States. This species appears to be intolerant of winter freezes (Tofangazi et al., 2014), and disperses from southern localities northward each year to as far north as the northern U.S. and southern Canada (Ontario). The adults have been observed from Maine southward to southern Florida, and westward to central Texas, central Oklahoma, Missouri, eastern Nebraska, and southern Minnesota. Apparent geographic isolates are also known from southern Arizona and New Mexico. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina, but is only rarely seen in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults are active year-round in Florida where there are often four or more generations per year, and mostly from August through November elsewhere in the U.S. As of 2023, our records range from mid-June through late-December, with a seasonal peak from August through November. Populations in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of North Carolina likely produce two generations per year.

HABITAT: The larvae feed on grasses, and the adults are commonly found in residential setting or other sites where cultivated warm-season grasses are maintained.

FOOD: The larvae feed on warm-season grasses, and in particular, members of the Poaceae (Allyson, 1984; Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2010; Tofangazi and Arthurs, 2012; Handfield and Handfield, 2021). The reported hosts include Creeping Bentgrass (*Agrotis stolonifera*), carpetgrasses (*Axonopus* ssp.), Bermudagrass (*Cynodon* ssp.), Centipede Grass (*Eremochloa ophiuroides*), Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*), Seashore Paspalum (*P. vaginitium*), St. Augustine Grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*) and Zoysiagrass (*Zoysia japonica*).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights, and will come to sugar bait and nectar sources.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR (S4S5)

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This species occurs statewide and uses lawns and other maintained turfgrasses as hosts. It appears to be secure within the state.