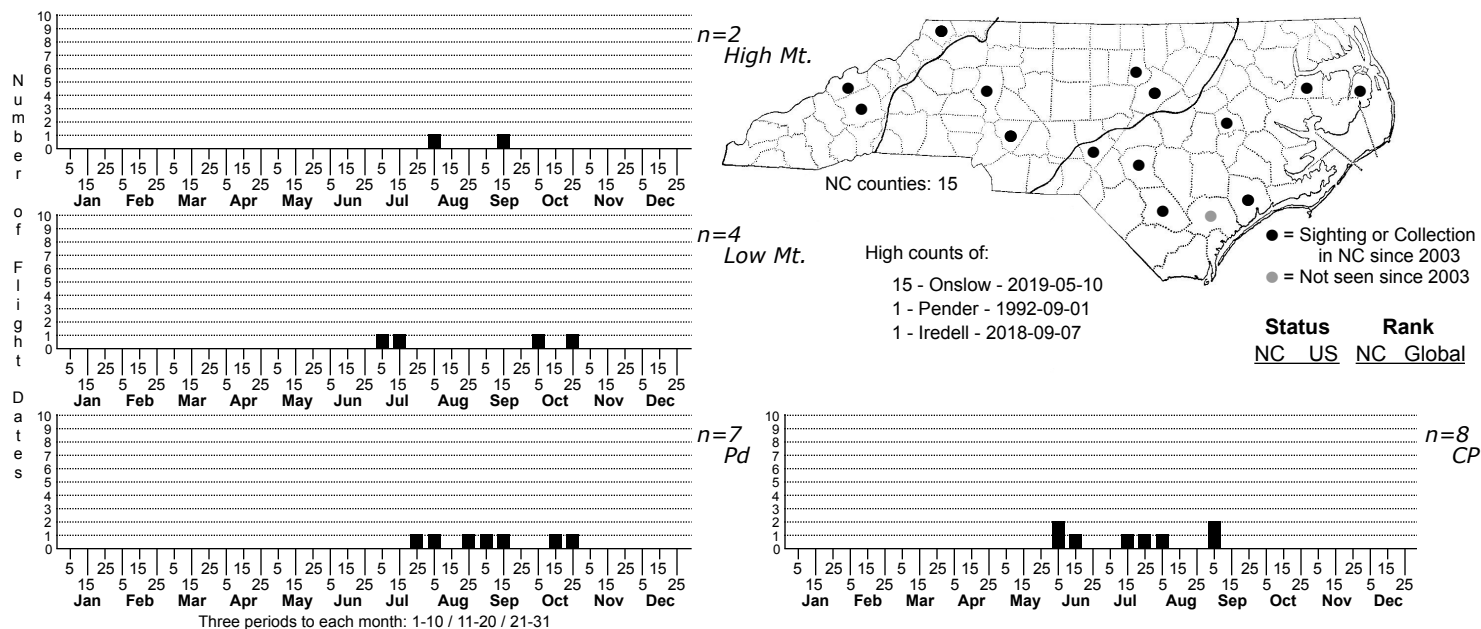


Herpetogramma theseusalis Herpetogramma Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Pyraustinae TRIBE: Spilomelini

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: Forbes (1923, as *Phylctaenia theseusalis*); Solis (2010)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The ground color of the forewing is yellowish-brown and lacks a white patch between the orbicular and reniform spots. There is also no contrasting dark marginal shade as seen in some *Herpetogramma* species (Solis, 2010). The postmedian line is straight between M2 and the costa, while the orbicular and reniform spots -- as well as the antemedian, postmedian, and terminal lines -- are all dark and contrasting.

DISTRIBUTION: *Herpetogramma theseusalis* is broadly distributed across eastern North America. It occurs in southeastern Canada from Ontario eastward to Nova Scotia and vicinity. From there the range encompasses much of the eastern US east of the Mississippi River to as far south as southern Florida. Isolated populations have been found farther west in Minnesota, southern Louisiana, and eastern Texas. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina, with most records from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults of this wide-ranging species have been found from April through November, with peak activity occurring in July. As of 2022, we have records from early June through October, with Coastal Plain adults on the wing a few weeks earlier than those in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge.

HABITAT: The larva use several species of ferns that are generally associated with moist grounds.

FOOD: Several fern species are documented hosts (Forbes, 1923; LoPresti and Morse, 2013; Solis, 2010; BugGuide). Potential hosts in North Carolina include the Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), Marsh Fern (*Thelypteris palustris*), Royal Fern (*Osmunda spectabilis*), Interrupted Fern (*Claytosmunda claytoniana*), and Cinnamon Fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*). As of 2022, our very limited records are all for Cinnamon Fern.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and can be reared from fern balls.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S3S5

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be relatively uncommon throughout the state, perhaps because of its reliance on Cinnamon Fern and other fern hosts.