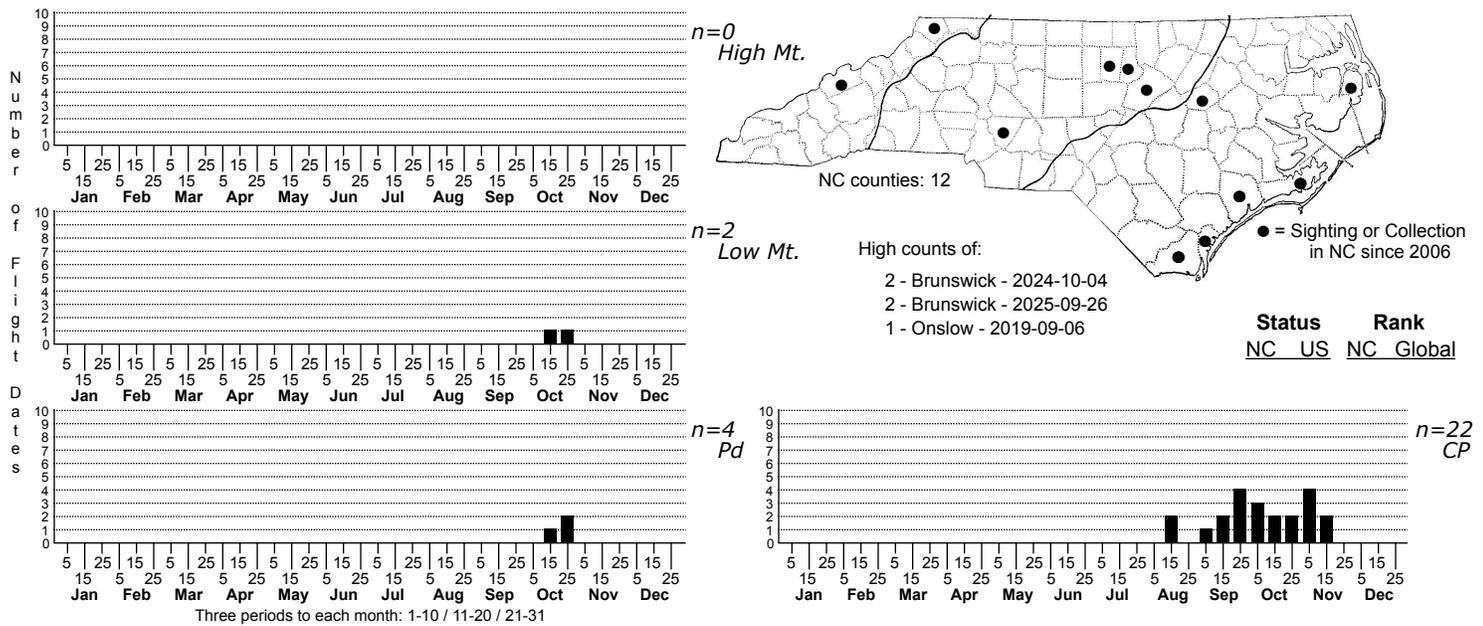


Syngamia florella Orange-spotted Flower Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Pyraustinae TRIBE: Spilomelini
 TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Hayden (2019).

ID COMMENTS: This brilliantly marked species with tropical affinities is unmistakable and the only one in its genus in North America. The forewing has a brown ground color that is tinged with reddish orange, along with three large yellow to orangish patches. The basal patch reaches the inner margin, while the other two touch the costa. The hindwing ground has more reddish-orange relative to the forewing, along with two large oval patches that are surrounded by a zone of darker shading. The fringe on the outer margin of the forewing and hindwing is mostly white with a dark brown basal line. The head, thorax, and abdomen offer additional brilliant coloration, with bands of dark brown, orange, brick red and silvery white intermixed.

DISTRIBUTION: *Syngamia florella* is a very wide-spread species that occurs from southern South America northward through Central America and the Caribbean to the southeastern U.S. and occasionally beyond. In the U.S., this species is most common in Florida and along the Gulf Coast to southeastern Texas, but scattered records occur elsewhere from southern New York southward to Florida and westward to central Texas, eastern Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. The more northern records may reflect long-distance movements from Florida and the Gulf Coast states (Pickering and Staples, 2016), but this has not been fully demonstrated. As of 2023, we have records from all three physiographic provinces, with most from the Coastal Plain. It is uncertain if our records reflect a resident species or one that engages in long-distant dispersal events from more southern localities.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly year-round in Florida and June through December in Louisiana, with a peak flight in September and October (Brou, 2002). Records from the northern part of the range are from August through November. As of 2023, our records are from mid-August through mid-November.

HABITAT: Most of our records are from dry Coastal habitats and from residential neighborhoods.

FOOD: The caterpillars appear to mostly specialize on low-growing plants in the family Rubiaceae (Fleming et al., 2014; Hayden, 2019), and mostly on species of *Spermacoce*, including *S. exilis*, *S. laevis*, *S. tetraquetra* and *S. verticillata*. Other hosts that are in the Rubiaceae include *Richardia grandiflora* and *Pentas lanceolata*. dos Santos Cabral (2023) reported that the larvae feed on Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea batatas*; Convolvulaceae) in Brazil, and Beadle and Leckie (2018) listed a *Boehmeria* (Urticaceae) as a host, but this has not been verified with additional observations.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are diurnally active, but also come to lights at night. They are commonly seen nectaring on low-growing native plants and ornamentals.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SU

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

COMMENTS: The residential status of this species needs to be confirmed in North Carolina. This species has a wide range in the Neotropics and could be present here primarily as an emigrant from more southern locales.