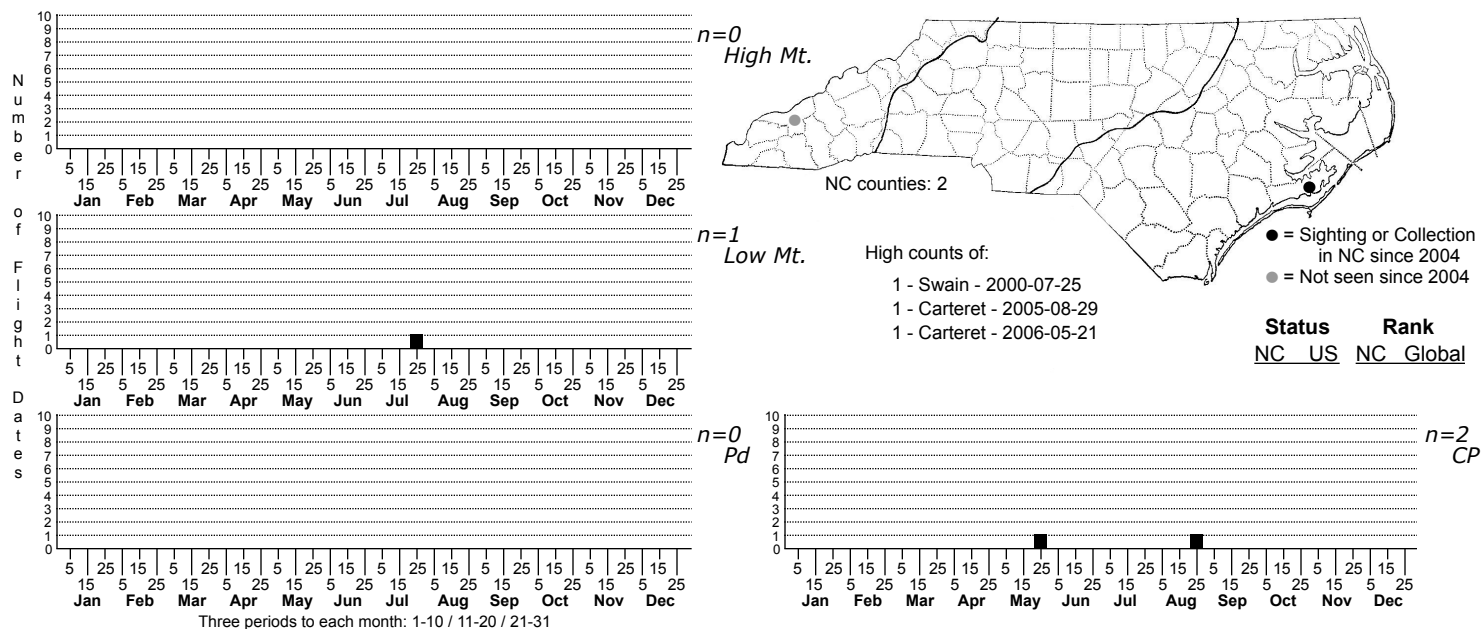


Donacula tripunctellus No common name



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Schoenobiinae TRIBE: [Schoenobiini]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: Members of the genus *Donacaulis* are found worldwide, but reach their greatest diversity in the Nearctic region. The group has proven to be taxonomically challenging due to the fact that most of the species are sexually dimorphic, are very similar externally, and exhibit substantial variation within species. Genitalia have proven to be the most useful diagnostic characters for delineating species, but almost all of the species were originally described based on external coloration and patterning. Descriptions and illustrations of genitalia were also lacking for most species until Martinez (2010) undertook a major revision of the Nearctic species. Her work revealed that there were at least 10 undescribed species in addition to the 11 described species in the New World. Additional studies of DNA barcoding and genitalia, including for North Carolina material, indicate that additional undescribed species remain to be formally described. "Some of these are probably identifiable, but, even with the Martinez thesis, there is a great deal of variation, and especially sexual dimorphism that makes these difficult" (Scholtens, 2017).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Martinez (2010)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following description is based on that of Martinez (2010). The frons, labial palps, antennae and thorax are pale-yellow in the females and yellowish-gray in the males. The forewing is concolorous with the head and thorax, but irrorated with brown scales. The discal cell has a brown spot and there is a series of three spots along the fold, with one below the discal spot, one on the middle of the fold, and a smaller spot near the base of the wing. The latter may be less noticeable in some specimens. There is an oblique line of smaller spots that extend from the apex to just past the middle of the wing that are inconspicuous in some specimens. A line of terminal spots is also present along the outer margin on the veins. The hindwing is yellowish-white and the abdomen is covered with a mixture of pale-yellow and yellowish-white scales. The anal tuft of the females is yellowish-white.

DISTRIBUTION: Martinez (2010) identified specimens from Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. As of 2023, our only record is from a lower-elevation site in Swain County.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been found from February through November in different areas of the range (Martinez, 2010). As of 2023, our only record is from late-July.

HABITAT: Our one record as of 2023 is from a lower elevation site near a campground in the Great Smoky Mountains.

FOOD: The hosts are undocumented. Based on several life history studies, the larvae of *Donacula* species appear to be stem borers of Poaceae and Cyperaceae that grow in wetlands (Martinez, 2010). This suggests that *D. tripunctellus* uses wetland grasses or sedges as hosts.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

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: We have only one record as of 2023 and are uncertain if it reflects a vagrant or a reproducing, resident population. March 2024