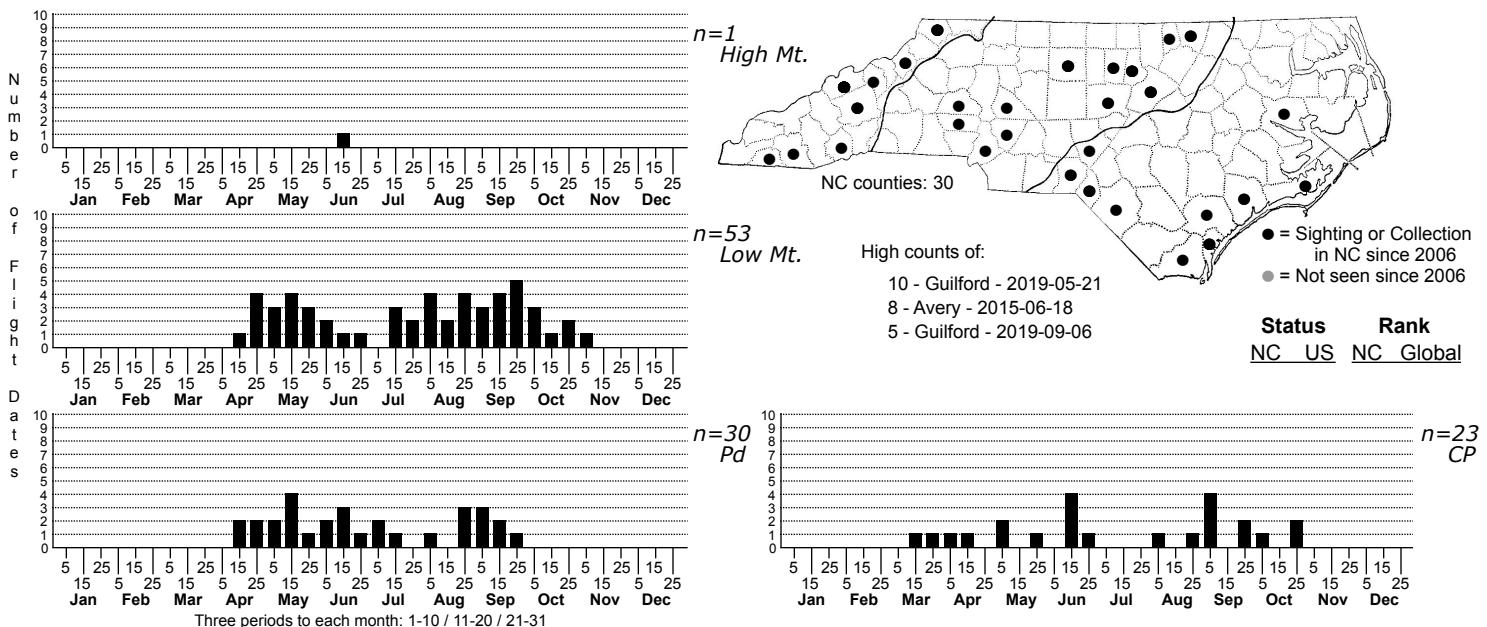


Crambus praefectellus Common Grass-veneer



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Crambinae TRIBE: Crambini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Crambus* includes around 155 species that are distributed globally. Some of the species are significant pests that can cause damage to agricultural crops, lawns and rangelands. This is one of 41 species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Pohl and Nanz, 2023), and one of fifteen species that occur in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Fernald (1896)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Ainslie (1923a)

ID COMMENTS: In this species the head, palps, and thorax are cinereus with a bronze luster (Fernald, 1896). The ground color of the forewing is golden fuscous and is overlain with a silvery white longitudinal stripe that is undivided. The stripe begins at the base of the wing and gradually widens to a point just past the middle of the wing, then gradually shortens to a sharp point just before the subterminal line. It is paralleled by a brown stripe along the costa that is nearly half as wide at the middle of the costa as the silvery stripe. The subterminal line is dark reddish-brown and v-shaped. A short, white dash is present on each side on the subterminal line along the costa. These are followed apically by a triangular reddish-brown mark with a white center and a dark brown terminal line that is most prominent on the costal half on the outer margin. A series of four or five black dots are present in the subterminal area that are separate from the terminal line by a short gap (Forbes, 1923). The fringe is pale-colored, while the hindwing varies from white to cream-colored and has a white fringe.

Crambus praefectellus is similar to *C. leachellus*, but the latter has a much thinner brown stripe along the costa that is less than one third as wide as the adjoining longitudinal white stripe when measured at the middle of the wing.

DISTRIBUTION: *Crambus praefectellus* is widely distributed across North America where it is most common in the eastern U.S. This species has been observed throughout much of southern Canada from British Columbia eastward to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and in the western U.S. mostly in relatively mesic habitats in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. In the eastern U.S. the range extends from Maine southward to Florida, and westward to Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and North Dakota. This species occurs in all three physiographic provinces in North Carolina, but is rare at higher elevation sites in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from March through November in different areas of the range, but most commonly from May through October. As of 2023, our records range from mid-March through early-November. Populations in North Carolina appear to have two or more generations yearly.

HABITAT: This species is commonly found in early successional habitats, pasturelands, field edges, roadway corridors and residential neighborhoods that support grasses.

FOOD: The larvae feed on grasses, including young corn plants, timothy, wheat and pasture grasses where this and other crambids can cause significant losses (e.g., Ainslie, 1922, 1923a, 1924; Webster, 1923). Solis (2008) noted that they also feed on sedges, while Ainslie (1923a) reported that they will readily feed on corn, wheat, rye, oats, timothy, Kentucky Bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and Yellow Foxtail (*Setaria glauca*) in captivity.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found near the bases of grasses and cereal crops. They also can be flushed fairly easily by walking through grassy habitats.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: This species is common and widespread in North Carolina and exploits weedy grasses and field crops that abound within the state.