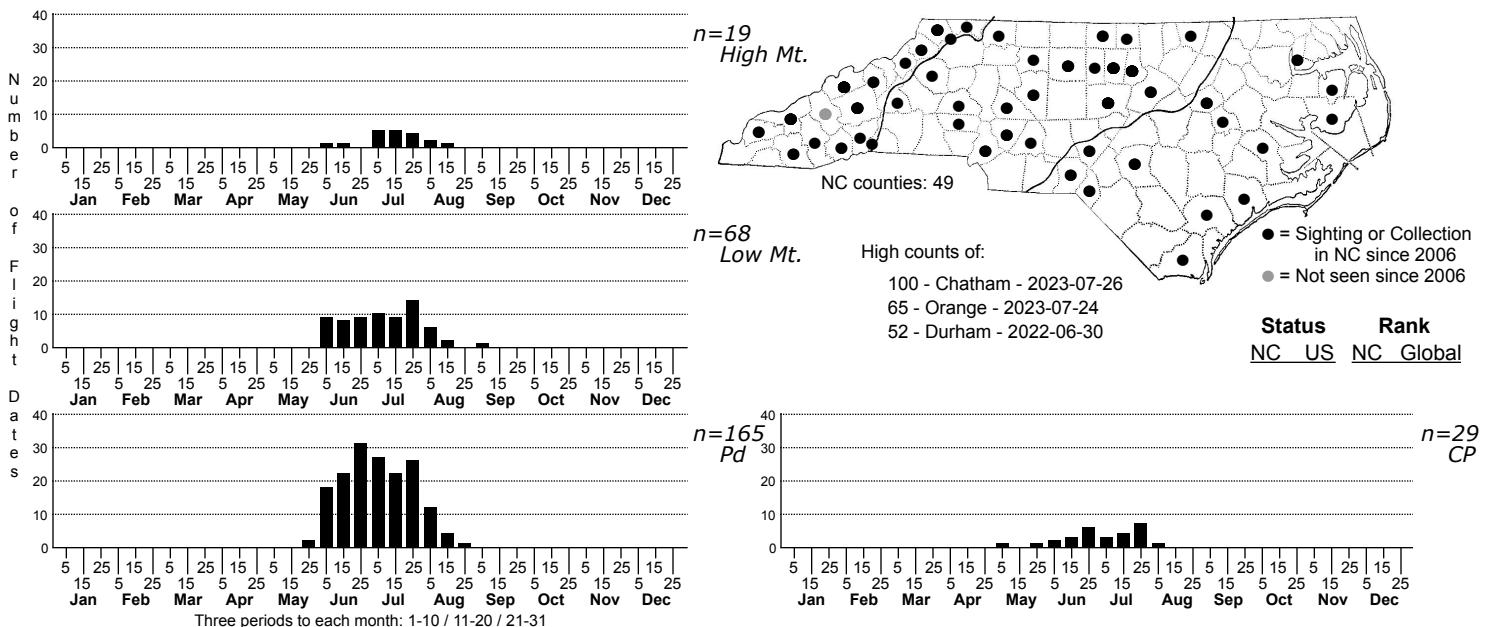


Crambus agitatellus Double-banded Grass-veneer



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: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: In this species the head and thorax are brownish-yellow. The palps when viewed from the side are mostly light fuscous with white beneath (Fernald, 1896). The forelegs are light fuscous, and the ground color of the forewing varies from brownish-yellow or brownish-orange to brown. The most conspicuous mark is a broad, silvery white, longitudinal stripe that gradually widens as it extends from the wing base to near the middle of the wing, then tapers to a sharp point at around two-thirds the wing length. A small tooth often project from the dorsal edge at the point where the stripe begins to taper, and the margins are lined with yellowish- to brownish-orange scales. The stripe is divided by a faint brownish-yellow to brown line that is usually incomplete and sometimes missing on worn specimens. When present, it extends from the distal end of the band basally and typically fades out near the middle of the wing. A V-shaped brownish-yellow to brown subterminal line is present at around four-fifths that is double, or nearly so, with the distal line often incomplete or broken on the dorsal half. The space between the lines is filled with silvery and blackish scales, with the blackish scales most prevalent on the costal half. In between the subterminal line and the end of the silver stripe there is a separate large white patch. The patch is bordered above and below with two silvery lines with black edges that alternate with brownish-yellow lines. The subapical area beyond the subterminal line has an outwardly oblique brownish-yellow line that extends to the outer margin. It is followed by a small triangular brownish-yellow patch and a similar white patch that adjoins the black terminal line that covers the apical third of the outer margin. The remainder of the outer margin has a series of four or five black dots or dashes. The fringe is silvery lead gray, while the hindwing is gray to grayish-white with a paler fringe. North Carolina populations have two common color forms, with the first having the ground color and lines light brownish yellow to yellowish-orange, and the second with the ground and lines brown to dark brown.

Crambus saltuellus is very similar but has a more prominent brown or brownish-yellow line running through the silver stripe, and has a larger number of dark and silver lines extending out from the upper portion of the silver band. In some individuals, dark streaks run close to the inner margin from the base of the wing to the subterminal line (BugGuide, 2018). In addition, the subterminal line is marginated by a line of silvery white scales on the distal side that is relatively obscure in *C. agitatellus*.

DISTRIBUTION: *Crambus agitatellus* is found in the eastern U.S. and in adjoining areas of southern Canada (Manitoba; Ontario; Quebec; New Brunswick; Nova Scotia; Prince Edward Island). In the U.S. the range extends from Maine to Florida, and westward to eastern Texas, central Oklahoma, eastern Kansas, eastern Nebraska, Minnesota and northeastern North Dakota. This common species occurs in every state east of the Great Plains, and is found statewide in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly from April through October in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak in June through August in most states. As of 2023, our records extends from late-May through early September, with a seasonal peak in June and July.

HABITAT: We have records from essentially all grass-containing habitats in the state, including high elevation fens, Longleaf Pine sand ridges, and suburban yards. Ainslie (1924) noted that they prefer meadows and pastures where there are numerous taller broadleaf plants present such as ironweed that serve as resting spots.

FOOD: The larvae have been reported to feed on grasses (Covell, 1984; Robinson et al., 2010; Beadle and Leckie, 2012), but very few details are known about host use. Bragg (2005) found that *C. agitatellus* and *Agriphila vulgivagellus* were the primary pests on a wheat crop in Washington. As far as we are aware, the native plants that are used by this species are undocumented.

OBSERVATION METHODS: This species comes well to blacklights and the adults nectar at night on wildflowers. They also can be flushed fairly easily by walking through grassy habitats.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S5

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

COMMENTS: This is a common species that occurs statewide and is secure.