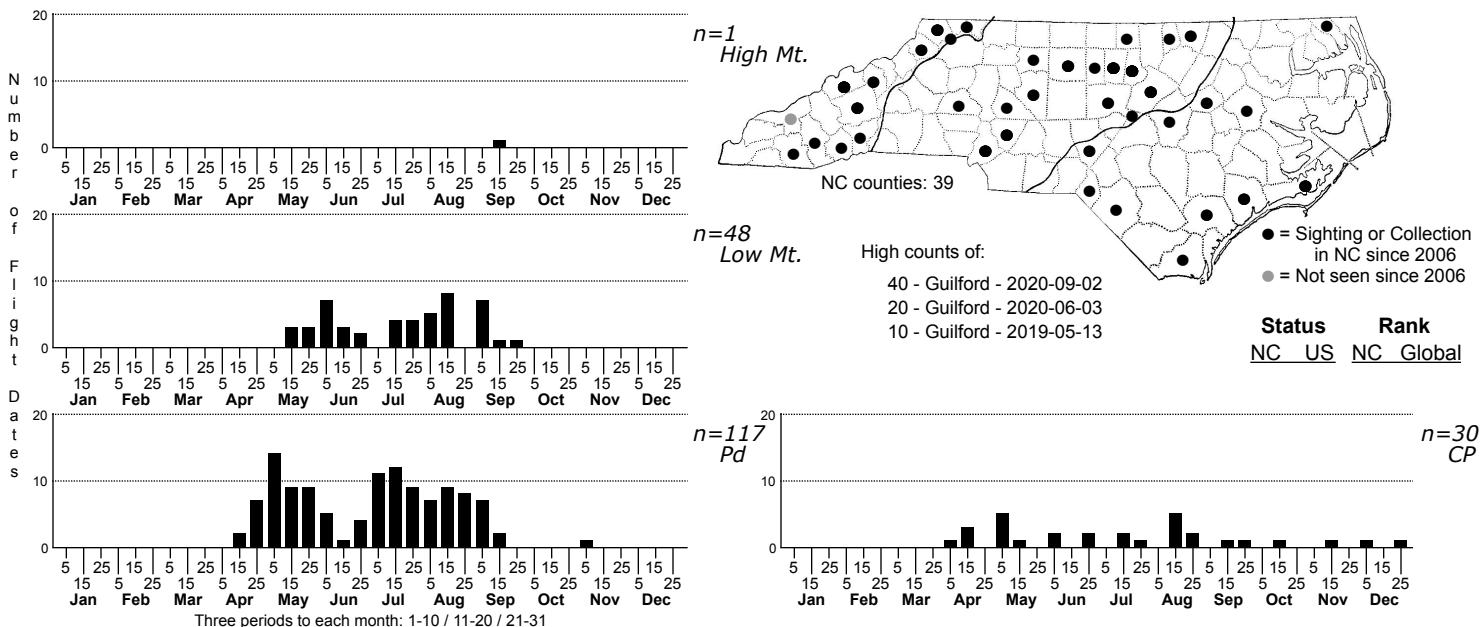


Fissicrambus mutabilis Changeable Grass-veneer



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Crambinae TRIBE: Crambini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Fernald (1896); Forbes (1923).

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a rather nondescript species. The palps and head are gray and the thorax grayish-brown. The ground color of the forewing is variable, but commonly is ashy-gray, grayish-brown or reddish-gray and is speckled with widely scattered dark spots and short streaks. The costa and subcostal region usually has a dark brown wash that extends from the wing base before fading out near the middle of the wing. A diffuse, faint, broad grayish band is often evident that extends from the base and may spread over the costal area except where the dark brown wash is present on the basal half. A relatively large, dark brown to blackish spot (sometimes represented as a pair of dashes) is present near the center of the wing at around two-thirds its length. In the best marked of our specimens, it appears to be a part of a faint jagged median line that is usually obscure. A dentate subterminal line is also present, but also often obscure, and there is a terminal line of seven blackish dots (Fernald, 1896; Forbes, 1923). The fringe is concolorous with the adjoining ground color, and the hindwing is gray or pale fuscous with a slightly paler fringe.

DISTRIBUTION: <i>Fissicrambus mutabilis</i> is widely distributed across much of the central and eastern U.S. and adjoining portions of southern Canada from Saskatchewan and Manitoba eastward to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. In the U.S. the range extends from Maine southward to southern Florida and westward to central Texas, central Oklahoma, eastern Kansas, eastern Nebraska, Minnesota and northeastern North Dakota. There are isolated records from Colorado and Wyoming. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults are active year-round in Florida and mostly from June through September in the northern part of the range. As of 2023, our records range from early-April through late-December, with Coastal Plain populations occasionally active through late-December. Local populations appear to have two or three generations per year depending on the locality. Ainslie (1924) noted that there are three generations in Tennessee.

HABITAT: Most of our records come from residential neighborhoods, where lawn grasses and ornamental grasses are the likely host plants. Other records come from pastures, meadows and other open habitats. We also have records from forested habitats in fragmented landscapes. Ainslie (1923b) noted that the adults in Tennessee prefer areas with tall grasses such as meadows. They generally tended to avoid both heavily cropped pastures and lawns that are mowed close to the ground. However, they can cause significant damage to lawns that are cut higher from the ground.

FOOD: The larval hosts include a large number of grass species, including cultivated grains such as corn, oats, barley, rye and wheat, and turf grasses of various sorts (Ainslie, 1923b; Pass, 1965; Robinson et al., 2010; Rogers, 2014). In addition to cultivated grains, the reported hosts include Orchard Grass (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>), Hairy Crabgrass (<i>Digitaria sanguinalis</i>), Tall Fescue (<i>Lolium arundinaceum</i>), Common Timothy (<i>Phleum pratense</i>) and Kentucky Bluegrass (<i>Poa pratensis</i>). Other grasses are undoubtedly used.

OBSERVATION METHODS: The adults are attracted to UV and building lights, and the larvae can be found in turf grasses.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR 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 within the state and is secure.