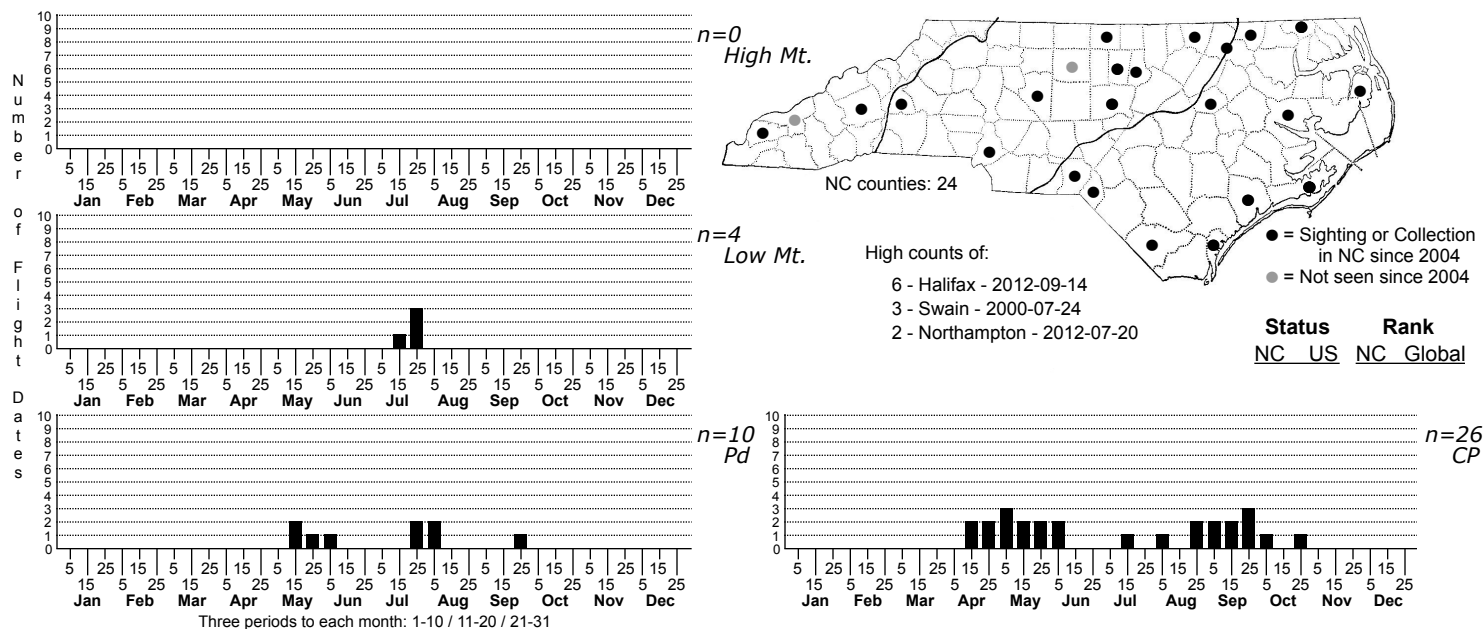


Vaxi critica Straight-lined Vaxi Moth



FAMILY: Crambidae SUBFAMILY: Crambinae TRIBE: Argyriini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS:

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Martinez and Brown (2007)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Vaxi critica* is boldly patterned with orange or orangish-brown on a white background. The palps and head are white above, with the sides of both colored orange or orangish-brown. The forelegs are orangish, and the thorax has a narrow white median stripe above, with orange or orangish-brown laterally. The forewing has a silvery-white ground color with a broad, orange or orangish-brown, oblique median band. The terminal line and fringe are concolorous with the median band, which is margined on both sides by a thin line of orangish-brownish to blackish scales. *Vaxi critica* is similar to *V. auratellus*, but the median band of the latter dramatically widens near the inner margin to produce a connecting neck with the terminal line.

DISTRIBUTION: *Vaxi critica* is widely distributed across the eastern U.S. and in adjoining areas of southern Canada (Ontario; Quebec; New Brunswick; Nova Scotia; Prince Edward Island). The range in the U.S. extends from Maine to southern Florida, and westward to eastern Texas, eastern Oklahoma, Missouri, northern Nebraska, Minnesota and northeastern North Dakota. This species occurs statewide in North Carolina, but is relatively uncommon in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults fly year-round in Florida and in all but the coldest months in other southern states. Northern populations typically fly from June through September, with a seasonal peak in July and August. As of 2023, our records range from late-April through late-October. Populations in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain appear to have at least two generations per year.

HABITAT: We have records from both barrier islands as well as a number of sandhill seeps, all of which are open and herb-dominated. We also have records from riparian habitats, including bottomland forests and lake and pond shore habitats.

FOOD: The larval host plants are undocumented.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

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 fairly common in North Carolina, but often restricted to moist or wet habitats. More information is needed on its host plants and larval life history before we can accurately assess its conservation status within the state.