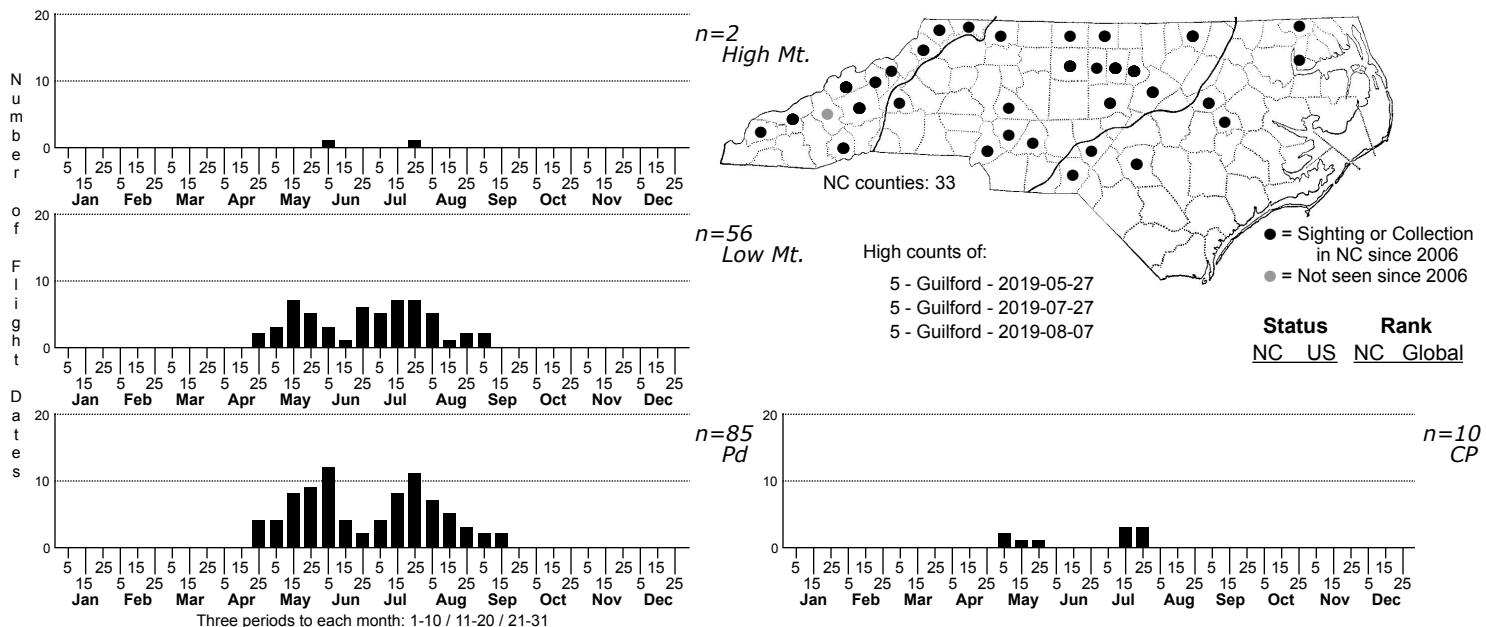


Pococera expandens Striped Oak Webworm Moth



FAMILY: Pyralidae SUBFAMILY: Epipaschiinae TRIBE: [Epipaschiini]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Pococera* contains a taxonomically challenging group of species with many forms that are difficult to distinguish based on external morphology, coloration, and patterning. Rearing and knowledge of the host species can be helpful in a few instances, and some species can be identified based on external characteristics. However, we find many specimens from North Carolina that are challenging to assign to species with high confidence.

The genitalia of species that have been examined from North Carolina are virtually identical and offer little help in sorting out species. DNA barcoding also offers little help since many of the established names show up in multiple BINs that likely reflect large numbers of misidentified specimens. Unfortunately, no one has any idea which of these specimens are accurately identified. A comprehensive study of North American members of the genus is clearly needed that will hopefully better delineate species boundaries and resolve some of the problems that hamper the accurate identification of specimens from within the state and elsewhere. At present, our assignment of specimens to certain species is best treated as provisional.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS:

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Our records come from primarily from mesic hardwood forests, including northern hardwoods and cove forests in the Mountains, mesic slopes, riparian forests, and shorelines in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

FOOD: The larvae appear to specialize on oaks (Prentice, 1966; Allyson, 1977; Robinson et al., 2012; Marquis et al, 2019). The reported hosts include White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Bear Oak (*Q. ilicifolia*), Shingle Oak (*Q. imbricaria*), Bur Oak (*Q. macrocarpa*), Chestnut Oak (*Q. montana*), Chinquapin Oak (*Q. muehlenbergii*), Pin Oak (*Q. palustris*), Northern Red Oak (*Q. rubra*), Post Oak (*Q. stellata*), and Black Oak (*Q. velutina*). In North Carolina, our only feeding record as of 2024 is for Northern Red Oak.

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S4

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

COMMENTS: