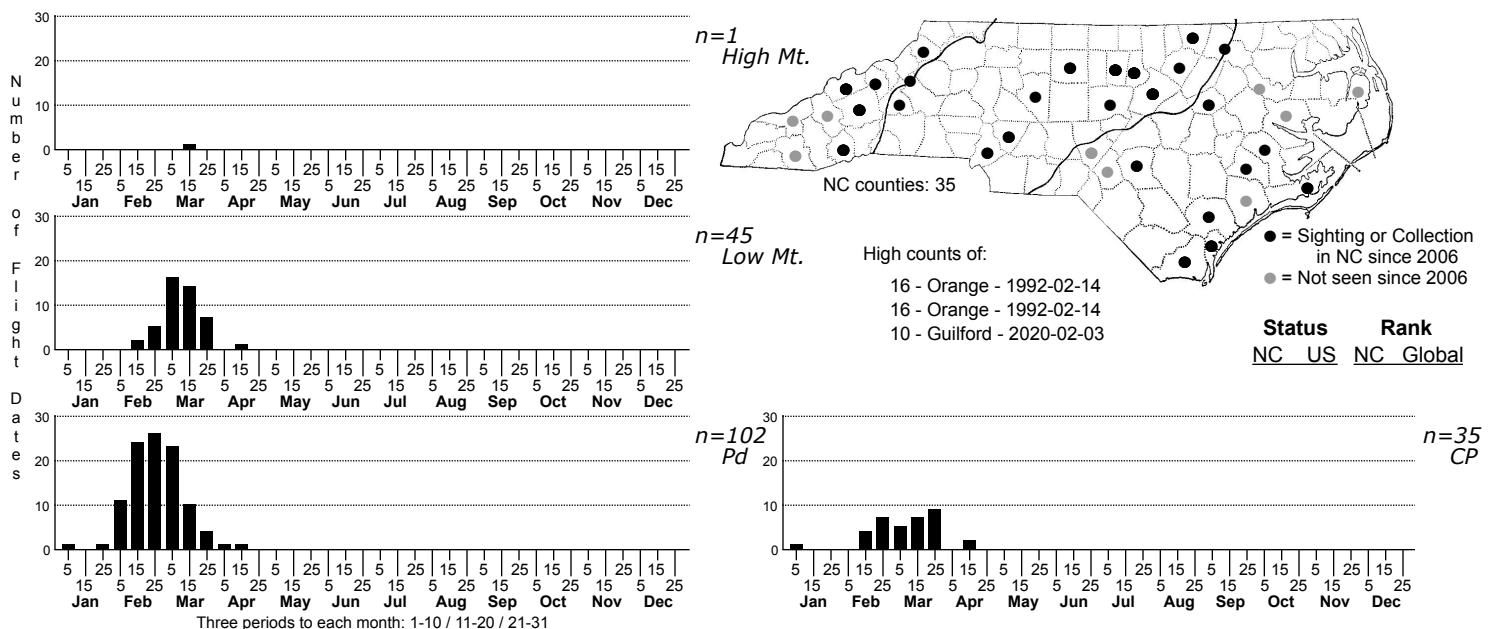


Phigalia strigataria Small Phigalia



FAMILY: Geometridae SUBFAMILY: Ennominae TRIBE: Bistonini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of four members of this genus that occur in North America, three of which are found in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948); Rindge (1975)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Wagner et al. (2001); Wagner (2005)

ID COMMENTS: *Phigalia* are among the very few geometrids that fly during mid-winter to early spring. Males can be distinguished from *Alsophila* and *Paleacrita*, which also fly during this period and are similarly pale gray, by their blackish antemedian, median, and postmedian lines. In *Phigalia strigataria*, the postmedian line is often fragmentary but definitely toothed, particularly towards the costa. The portion of the postmedian close to the inner margin is usually fairly straight or gently incurved towards the median line but not strongly bulging as in *denticulata* (Covell, 1984). *Strigataria* is generally less mottled than *Phigalia denticulata* and is often tinged with an olive or greenish shade. Females of all three species of *Phigalia* have stubby, non-functional wings (which are virtually absent in female *Alsophila* and *Paleacrita*). Females of *strigataria* are similar to those of *titea* but are smaller and browner, "with practically no pale gray scaling on the head, thorax, or wings" (Rindge, 1975).

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs statewide, including the Outer Banks and High Mountains

FLIGHT COMMENT: Has a single late winter/early spring flight. Emerges later than *P. denticulata* but overlaps both that species and *Phigalia titea*.

HABITAT: Appears to occupy wetter habitats than the other two species of *Phigalia*, occurring more often in floodplain forests in both the Coastal Plain and Piedmont. However, it also occurs in maritime scrub habitats and xeric sandhills, although we do not have records from longleaf pine savannas or flatwoods or from peatland habitats. Occurs in wooded residential neighborhoods as well as natural areas.

FOOD: Larvae are polyphagous on hardwood trees and shrubs. Wagner et al. (2001) specifically list blueberry (*Vaccinium*), chestnut (*Castanea*), elm (*Ulmus*), hazelnut (*Corylus*), maple (*Acer*), oak (*Quercus*), and willow (*Salix*). In the North Carolina Coastal Plain, J.B. Sullivan has found larvae on Sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*), Turkey Oak (*Quercus laevis*), and Laurel Oak (*Q. laurifolia*). We also have records for Allegheny Chinquapin (*Castanea pumila*), Scarlet Oak (*Q. coccinea*), and Downy Arrowwood (*Viburnum rafinesqueanum*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Adults have short, non-functional mouthparts (Forbes, 1948); consequently, they do not come to bait or show up at flowers. They appear to come fairly well to blacklights but usually only in small numbers; our records show a maximum of 5 captured in a single trap.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be broadly distributed in the state and occupies a wide range of habitats. It thus appears to be secure.