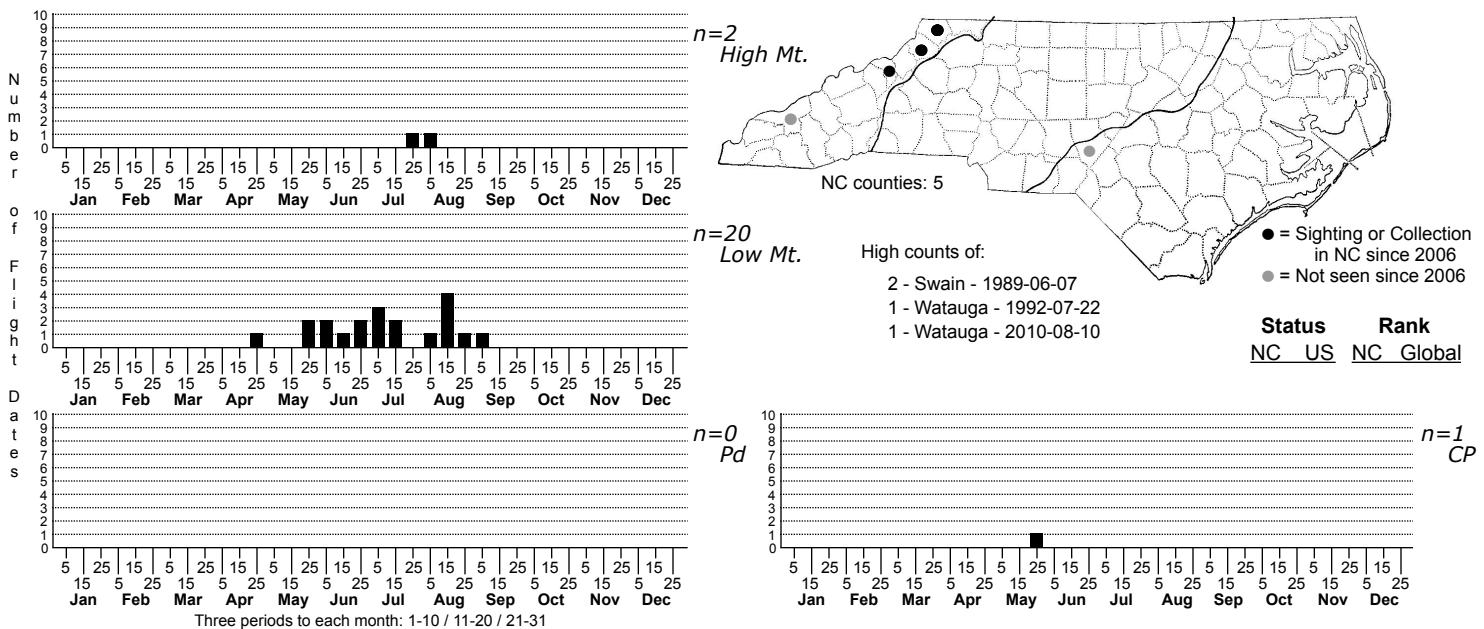


# *Cabera variolaria* Vestal Moth



FAMILY: Geometridae SUBFAMILY: Ennominae TRIBE: Caberini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The genus *Cabera* as currently conceived is found in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Some 30 species are known of which 5 occur in the United States and 3 are found in North Carolina.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948); Rindge (1956); McGuffin (1981)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1948); Wagner et al. (2001)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized, white Geometrid usually marked with three grayish lines. Keys for specimens of *Cabera* from North America are given in Forbes (1948) and McGuffin (1981). For the most part, however, they do not work for our individuals of *C. erythema* and *C. variolaria*, both of which can be marked with well defined crosslines or be almost entirely white. For males the color of the pectens is the best external character: white in *C. erythema* and black in *C. variolaria* (with the occasional white scale). Easily confused with other small white geometrids such as *Lomographa vestalata* (smaller, pearly white, no pectinations), *Gueneria similaria* (orangish wash), *Scopula ordinata* (larger, pointed forewings), and perhaps worn specimens of *Speranza pustularia* (crosslines reddish and widening at costa).

DISTRIBUTION: May be restricted to *Salix sericea* in the mountains between 2,000' and 4200'. Piedmont records lacking to date but one record exists for the Fall-line Sandhills, which needs to be checked.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The species is on the wing throughout most of the warm months (May-September) and probably has 2-3 broods each year.

HABITAT: Associated with poplar (*Populus*) and (*Salix*) elsewhere but in North Carolina so far found only with *Salix* and the open, streamside habitats where willow is common. It has been recorded flying with *C. erythema* in Swain County.

FOOD: Both poplar (*Populus*) and willow (*Salix*) species are used further north (Wagner et al., 2001). In North Carolina, J.B. Sullivan has reared a larva from willow, and adults have been collected only in the vicinity of willows.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Adults readily come to light and can be flushed near willows during the day. It is unlikely they respond to baits.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: We still have records from only scattered sites, mostly concentrated in the southern half of the mountains. However, its habitats and host plants are widespread in this region and it is observed regularly at some sites. It appears to be secure within the state.