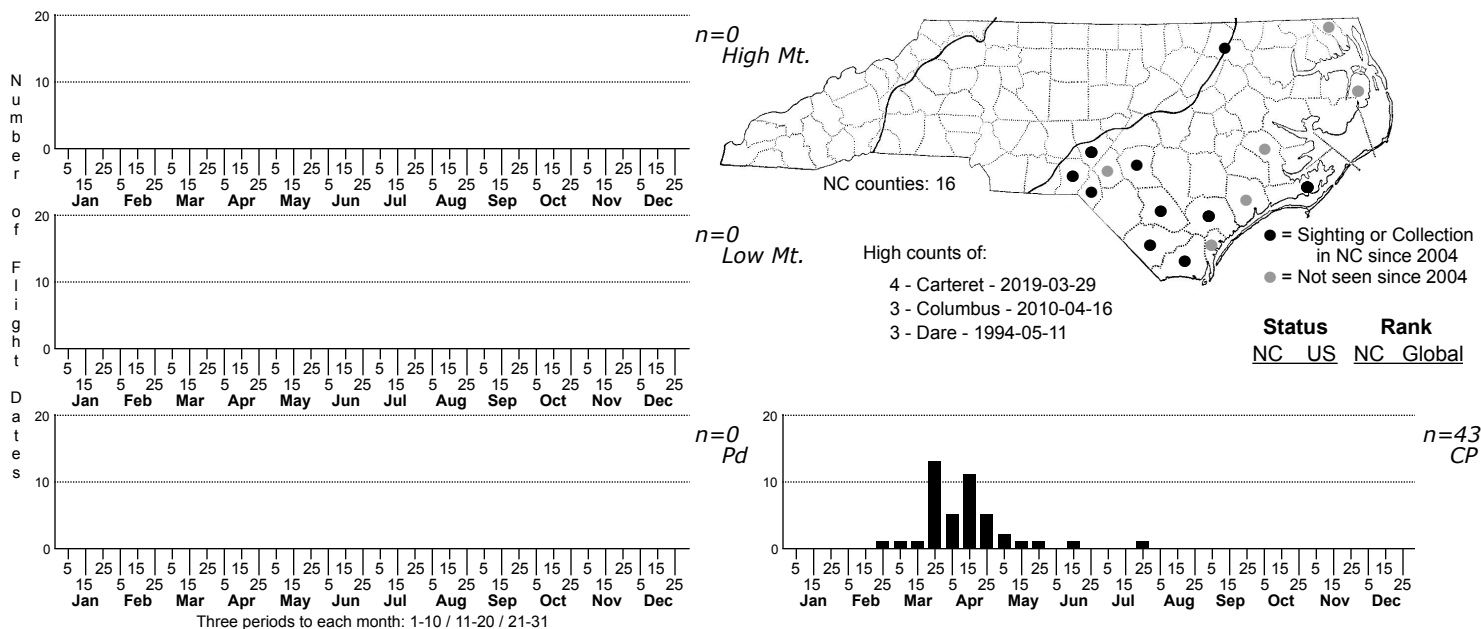


## *Petrophora divisata* Common Petrophora Moth



FAMILY: Geometridae SUBFAMILY: Ennominae TRIBE: Lithinini

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: A smallish genus of some 7 species distributed from Africa through Europe and into North America. Two species occur in the eastern United States but we have confirmed records of a single species in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948; as *Lithina extremaria*)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The delicate pinkish color of this moderately sized geometrid together with its flight period, early spring should served to differentiate it from most other species. It might be confused with reddish individuals of *Erastria cruentaria* but in that species the forewing crosslines are not parallel. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: All of our records come from the Coastal Plain, including the Fall-line Sandhills.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults are active from late February through May with occasional stragglers in later months.

HABITAT: Most of our records come from Longleaf Pine habitats, including Wet Savannas, Flatwoods and Sandhills. A few also come from Barrier Islands, peatlands, and pond and lake shorelines. All of these sites support populations of ferns, particularly Bracken.

FOOD: The genus is characterized by its capacity to feed on ferns in the larval stages. The specificity of this adaptation in North Carolina is unknown. Our records are restricted to the Coastal Plain and eastern Piedmont which might be a clue to the species of fern that is being used by the larvae. Bracken has been implicated for the other species in the Eastern U.S. but we have no specific records for *P. divisata*. It should be noted that Bracken occurs throughout the state.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: Adults have been recorded in light traps and are unlikely to be attracted to bait. Occasionally, adults can be flushed during the day. Larvae should be sought in April as adults are active from late February through early April.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 [S4]

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

COMMENTS: This species is regionally restricted in North Carolina and appears to be at least somewhat of a habitat specialist. However, it is distributed over most, if not all, of the Coastal Plain and occupies a wide-range of fern-containing habitats. It appears to be secure within the state.