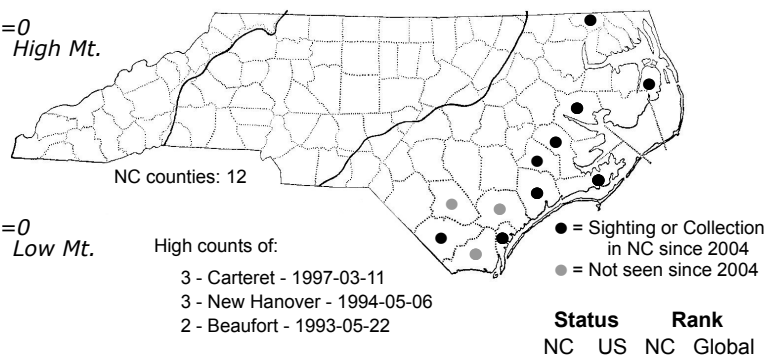
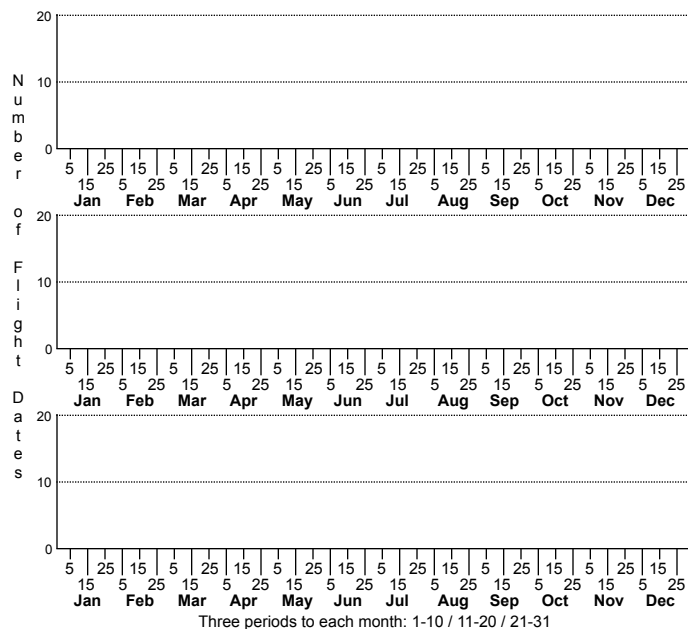


Tacparia zalissaria Southern Pale Alder Moth



FAMILY: Geometridae SUBFAMILY: Ennominae TRIBE: Lithinini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: A wholly North American genus containing three species, two of these occur in North Carolina. The third species ranges south to New Jersey. The genus was studied by Rupert (1949) and Ferguson (1973).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Rupert (1949); Ferguson (1973)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: While vaguely similar to a number of other Geometrid species, they are distinct enough in coloration to be correctly identified based on maculation. Two color forms, gray and brown (Ferguson, 1973), occur in North Carolina.

DISTRIBUTION: All of our records come from the Outer Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: A single brood is on the wing in the outer Coastal Plain from the end of February through the first week of May.

HABITAT: Most of our records come from Tidewater habitats, where Common Wax Myrtle (<i>Morella cerifera</i>) is a common species. Further inland, it has been recorded in both Longleaf Pine savannas/flatwoods and peatlands, habitats where <i>Morella carolinensis</i> and <i>M. pumilla</i> are common. Thus far, we have not collected this species in the Piedmont, where Common Wax Myrtle is a common horticultural shrub.

FOOD: The only confirmed host plant for the genus -- for <i>detersata</i> -- is alder, but that is unlikely to be the foodplant for this species. <i>Tacparia atropunctata</i> and <i>T. zalissaria</i> may instead be associated with species in the Myricaceae (Ferguson, 1973).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults have been recorded in light traps and may respond to bait but we have no known records of them doing so. They probably can be found active during the day. Look for caterpillars in April through early June. Caterpillars of this genus and related ones are known to wriggle violently when disturbed.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: This species has a restricted geographic distribution in North Carolina and appears to be somewhat specialized in terms of habitat. More needs to be learned about its host plant and habitat preferences, but if it feeds on Wax Myrtles, it is likely to be secure in the state.