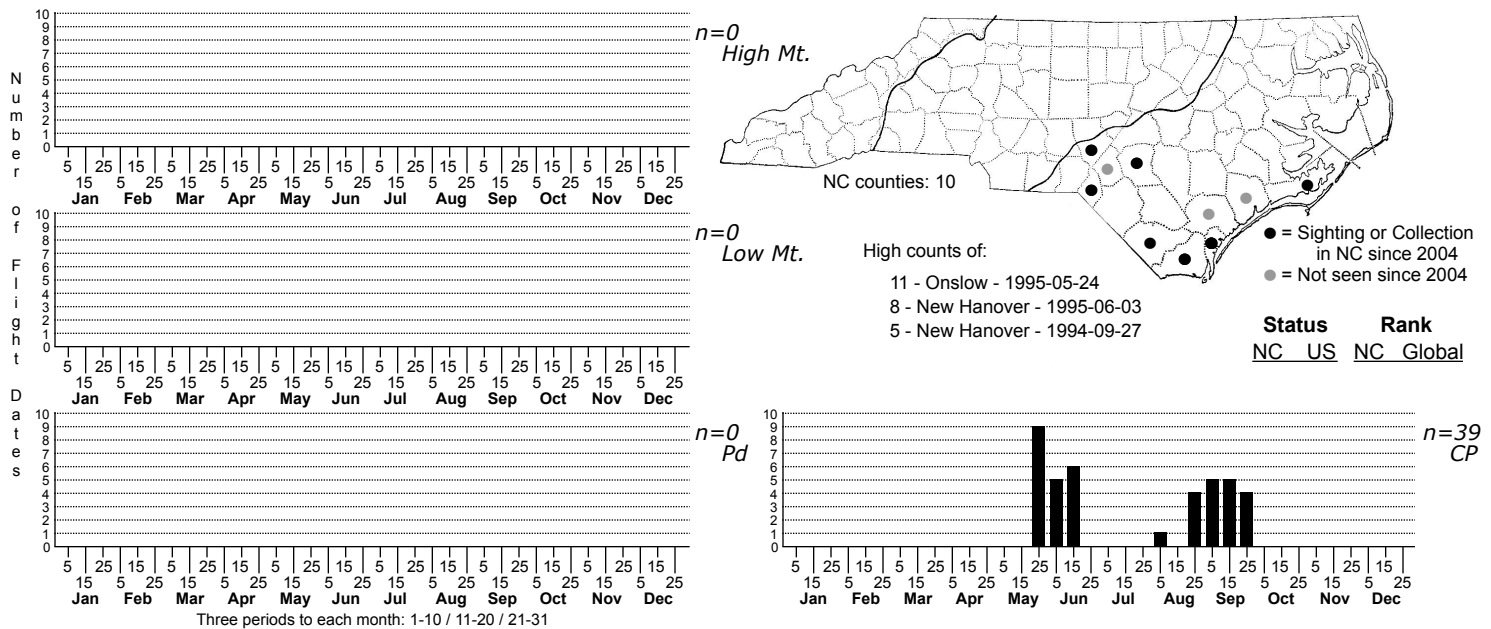


Idaea ostentaria Showy Wave Moth



FAMILY: Geometridae SUBFAMILY: Sterrhinae TRIBE: Sterrhini

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of thirty species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Pohl et al., 2016). Thirteen have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: The only published account we were able to find was Walker's original description (Walker, 1861).

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: As described by Walker (1861, as *Acidalia ostentaria*), this species has a grayish white ground color, speckled with black. As in several other members of the Sterrhini, the head is blackish except for inter-antennal bar. The wings are "hardly elongated", with the forewings "rectangular at the tips: and the "hind part of the exterior border rather oblique". Both the antemedian and postmedian lines are irregular, black, and very distinct, while the median and subterminal lines are usually indistinct; the postmedian, in particular is often represented by a series of black points that are sometimes connected to form a more continuous, if heavily accented line. The discal dots are also black, somewhat pointed, and fairly large. A series of cinerous (ashy gray) lunules runs along the margins of the wings (forming a broken adterminal line), with a series of black marginal points situated in between the lunules and located closer to the margin. Several other members of the Sterrhini are similar in size and color, with *Lobocleta ossularia* probably the most likely to be confused with *ostentaria* in our area, with its whitish-gray ground color and an undulating postmedian line composed of separate points. *Ossularia*, however, has a more elongated and pointed forewing and typically does not have the alternating marginal rows of lunules and dots that are characteristic of *ostentaria*. *Ossularia* also often has a diffuse gray median line that is usually missing or poorly developed in *ostentaria*.

DISTRIBUTION: Appears to be restricted to the southern half of the Coastal Plain in North Carolina, including the Fall-line Sandhills

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably bivoltine in North Carolina, flying in the late spring and again in late summer

HABITAT: Koss and Borth (2006) consider this species to be a specialist on xeric oak-pine scrub in Florida, which is consistent with our observation of this species: virtually all North Carolina records come from Coastal Fringe Sandhills or Xeric Sandhill Scrub communities, including some of the most xeric sand barrens we have sampled in the state.

FOOD: Host plants appear to be unknown (Heppner, 2007).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Appears to come well to blacklights

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S2S3

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation, however, does not confer any legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: Although this species does not appear to be hard to collect in the right habitat, North Carolina records come from fewer than 10 sites, all located within the southern part of the Coastal Plain. *Ostentaria* seems to be a strong habitat specialist, occurring almost solely within fairly large tracts of Xeric Sandhill Scrub or similar dry-xeric sandhill communities. Although too dry and sandy to have been cultivated much in the past, sandridge habitats continue to be converted to tree farms, golf courses, or developments. The coastal sand ridges where most of our records come from are particularly threatened due to waterfront development and are also vulnerable to the effects of sea-level rise.