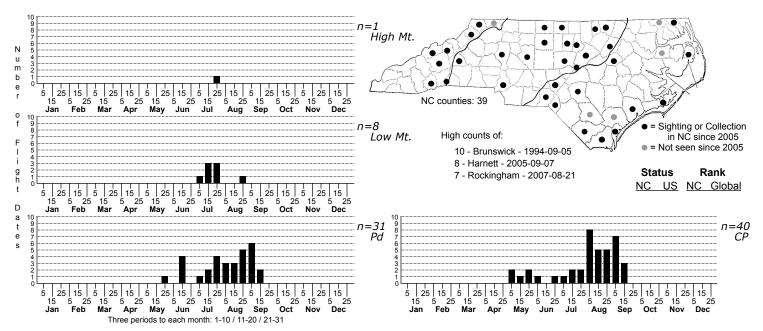
Manduca sexta Carolina Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Sphinginae TRIBE: Sphingini TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: A large Neotropical genus (63 species) of which 10 occur in the United States and 4 in North Carolina. This is our most well-known species.

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

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948); Hodges (1971); Tuttle (2007)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1948); Wagner (2005); Tuttle (2007)

ID COMMENTS: A large, grayish-brown sphinx moth. Manduca sexta is very similar and often confused with M. quinquemaculatus which is grayer but similar in size and feeds on many of the same plants. M. sexta is browner and on the hindwing there is a median thick black line formed by the merger of two lines. In M. quinquemaculatus these two black lines are separate for their entire length with gray between them. Additionally, M. sexta has a series of small white dots at the base of the forewing which are absent in M. quinquemaculatus. The overall pattern is smudged in M. sexta but distinct, crisp and quite elegant in M. quinquemaculatus.

DISTRIBUTION: This species occurs across the state, but is rare in the high mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably two principal broods.

HABITAT: This species occurs in open agricultural areas throughout the state. The larvae are known as tobacco hornworms and are a common pest of tomatoes in home gardens and tobacco in agricultural fields.

FOOD: Larvae feed on most members of the Solanaceae but most often on tobacco and tomato; other reported hosts include ground-cherry (<i>Physalis</i>) and Carolina Horsenettle (<i>Solanum carolinense</i>) (Wagner, 2005). In North Carolina, most of our records are from garden tomatoes, but we also have records from tobacco, garden peppers, Devil's-trumpet (<i>Datura innoxia</i>), and eggplant.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults are active from dusk onward at flowers and are attracted to strong lights, such as mercury-vapor lamps, but come only in small numbers to 15 watt UV lights. They do not come to baits.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S5]

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

COMMENTS: Found primarily in agricultural areas and is not of conservation concern in North Carolina