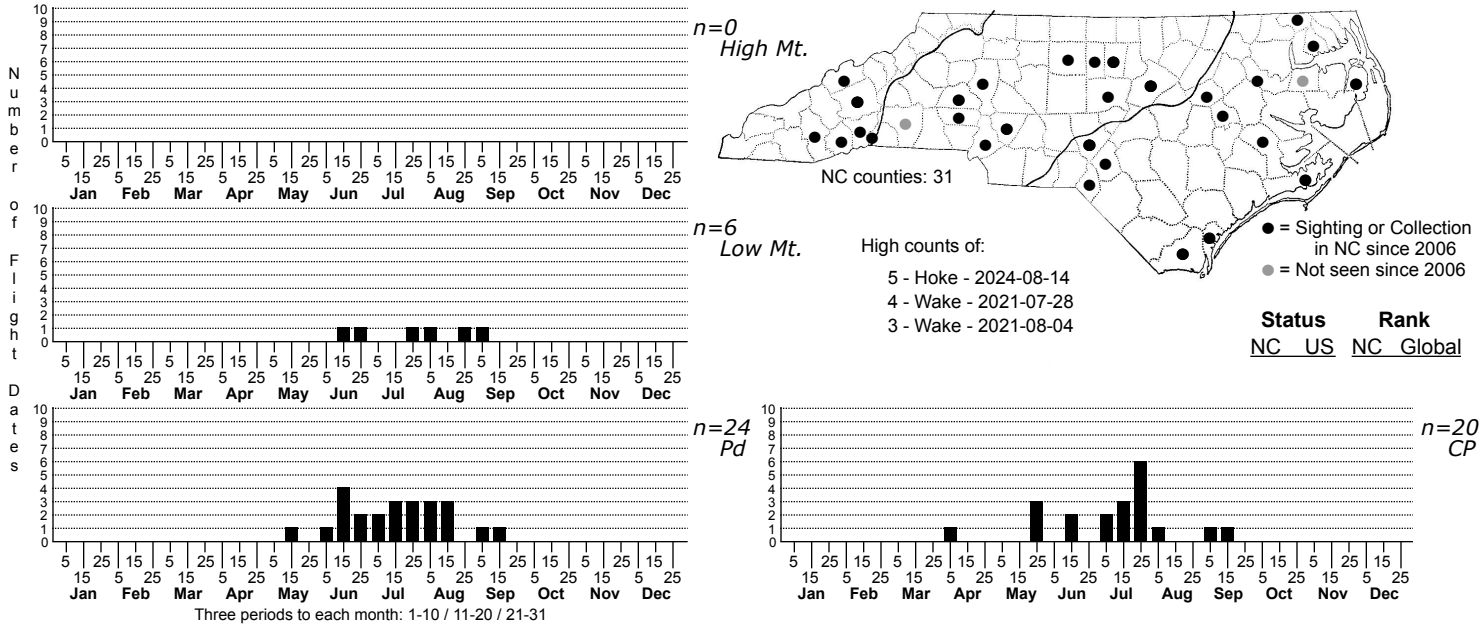
Manduca rustica Rustic Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Sphinginae TRIBE: Sphingini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: A large Neotropical genus (63 species) of which 4 occur in North Carolina.

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 moth with a strikingly pattern of brown and white patches, overlaid by fine scalloped brown lines; has a small white discal spot. One of the largest members of the genus, this handsome moth always attracts attention. It is much larger than Dolba hyloeus which has a similar pattern.

DISTRIBUTION: Most of our records -- including all recent ones -- come from the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have just one flight period in the late summer.

HABITAT: Most commonly found in wooded areas but likely to occur around any strong source of light as the species is a strong flyer.

FOOD: Larvae are polyphagous, feeding primarily on the Bignoniaceae, but also recorded from a wide array of plants. Among the reported hosts are Crossvine (Bignonia capreolata), Fringetree (Chionanthus virginicus), ash (Fraxinus), sunflower (Helianthus), and privet (Ligustrum) (Wagner, 2005; Mejia et al., 2020). In North Carolina, larvae have frequently been recorded feeding on American Beautyberry (Callicarpa americana), with other records including Fringetree, Lantana, Gardenia, Buddleja, and privet.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults commonly come to flowers at dusk; periwinkle is a favorite. Attracted to lights, especially strong lights such as mercury vapor, but in smaller numbers to 15 watt UV lights. Does not come to baits. One is lucky to see this species on an annual basis but the use of mercury vapor or strong spotlights increases the chances.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: Rarely observed but that may be due to the lack of collecting using mercury-vapor lights or other strong UV-emitting lights. Host plants and habitats do not appear to be a restricting factor.