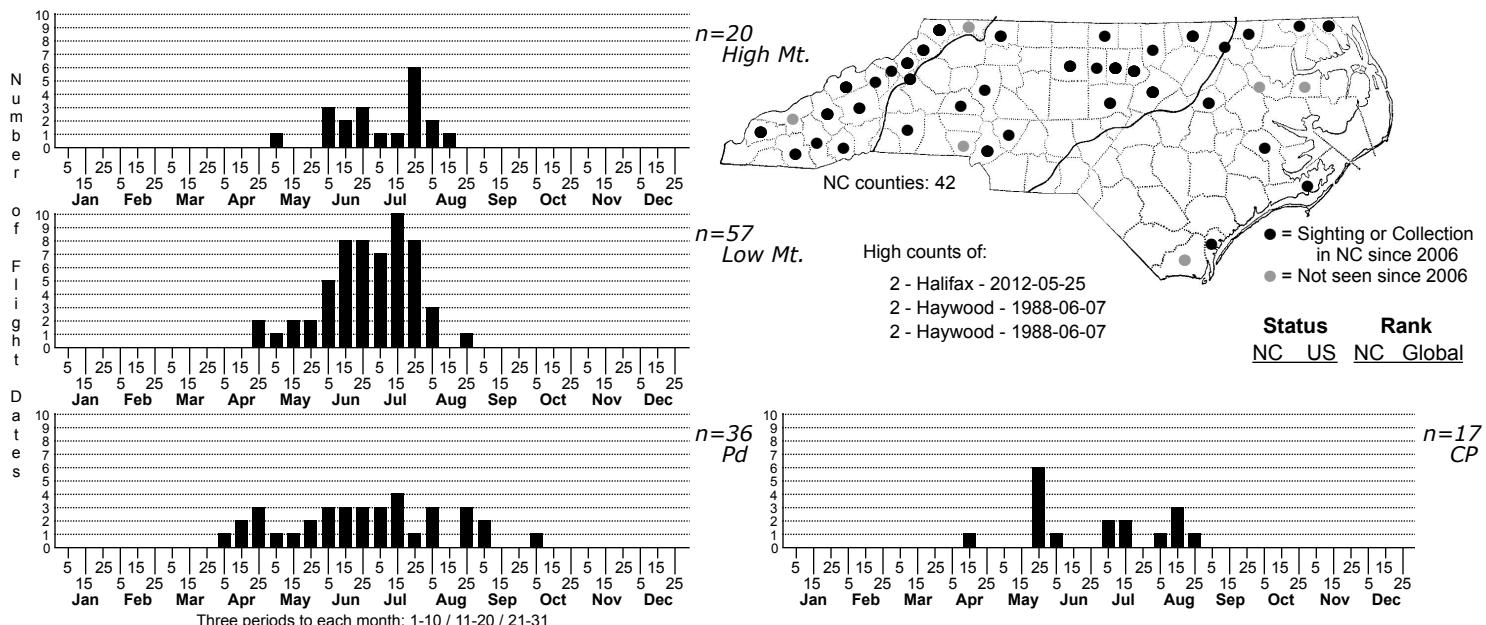


Ceratomia undulosa Waved Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Sphinginae TRIBE: Sphingini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: Six species of this genus occur in the United States with a few more in the Neotropics. The genus appears to be an assemblage of several unrecognized genera and our three species eventually will probably all be placed in separate genera.

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 with double lines, several dark dashes, and a small white discal dot. This species is most likely to be confused with *Ceratomia catalpae* which is a smaller, duller brown species with a reduced reniform spot. It is also similar in at least size and shape to *Manduca jasminearum*, which is generally browner, has a prominent oblique dark dash, and lacks a discal dot. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Our most common *Ceratomia* (unless you live in a grove of Catalpa trees) and found everywhere in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Apparently there are two broods but individuals flying in May and representing the first brood are uncommon. Later in the season this species together with *Darapsa myron* and *Paonias excaecata* make up the bulk of sphingid catches in light traps.

HABITAT: Our records come almost entirely from hardwood forests growing on rich soils, including brownwater river floodplains in the Coastal Plain, riparian and basic-mesic forests in the Piedmont and Mountains (including rich cove forests). Additionally, there are several records from the Great Dismal Swamp State Park, possibly associated with blackwater swamp species of Ash (i.e., Carolina or Pumpkin Ash).

FOOD: Larvae are apparently stenophagous, feeding mainly on ash, but also reported from Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) and lilac (also in the Oleaceae) (Wagner, 2005). Forbes (1948) also lists privet (*Ligustrum*). In North Carolina, larvae have been found on White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*), Green Ash (*F. pennsylvanica*), and Fringetree.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Originally recorded as feeding on flowers but the tongue is small and with no recent nectaring records, feeding is questionable. Adults come readily to lights but not to baits.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: This is a species that is likely to be affected by the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, which is destroying its major host plants. However, it is currently widespread and abundant and its potential use of privets may allow it to survive. However, its status should be closely monitored.