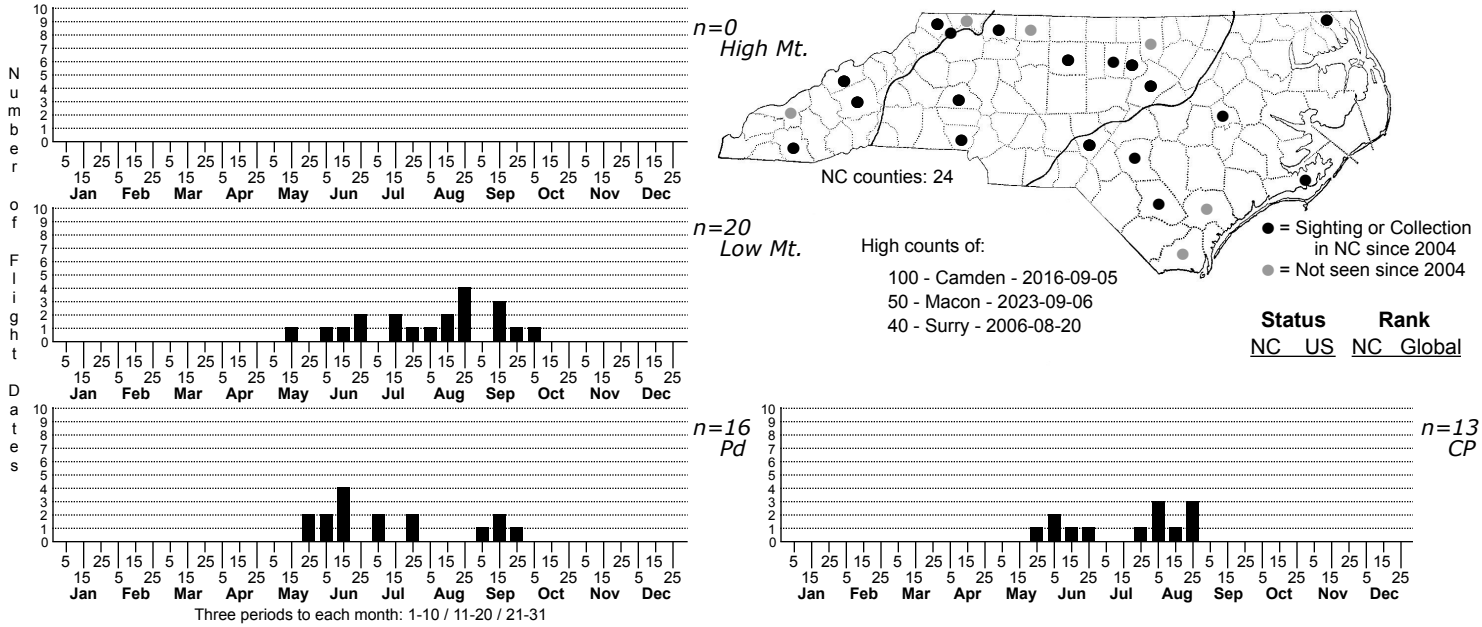
Ceratomia catalpae Catalpa Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Sphinginae TRIBE: Sphingini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: Six species of this genus occur in the US 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: This is the smallest and darkest species in the genus in North Carolina. Can be confused with C. undulosa but this is a smaller and darker species that usually appears smudged. It is usually captured within sight of a Catalpa tree. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: More common in the mountains than elsewhere in the state but may occur statewide except possibly for the Barrier Islands and High Mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably two broods

HABITAT: Catalpa is native to riparian habitats in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast but is not considered to be naturally occurring in North Carolina. Most records for this moth are probably associated with either planted Catalpa or with escapes that are now found widely along the edges of fields and other disturbed areas. The moth may have spread artificially, since the caterpillars are often raised commercially as fish bait.

FOOD: Monophagous, one of the few members of this family specialized on a single host plant. Catalpa is exclusively used as recorded so far.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults have a very short proboscis and lack the full set of muscles needed to imbibe nectar. They have not been recorded at flowers but come readily to light but not to baits. Caterpillars can be quite conspicuous.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 S3S4

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

COMMENTS: As a likely introduced species feeding on an introduced, somewhat invasive plant, this species is of no conservation concern in North Carolina except possibly as a control on the spread of Catalpa.