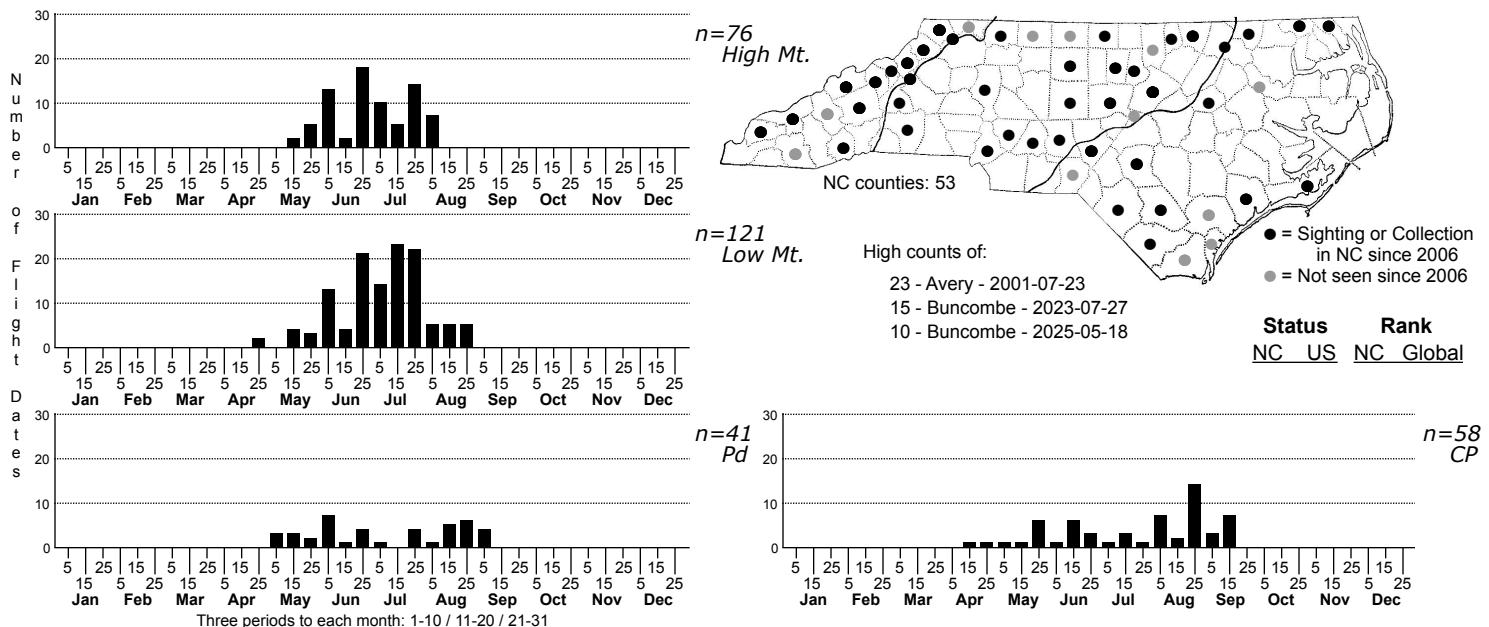


Paonias excaecata Blind-eyed Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Smerinthinae TRIBE: Smerinthini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: A Holarctic genus of 4 species of which 3 occur in North America and North Carolina. Two are among our most common 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 medium-sized species with narrow forewings and conspicuous eyespots on the hindwings. Similar in pattern to *Smerinthus jamaicensis*, from which it is distinguished by its typical brown instead of gray ground color; absence of the dark crescent at the apex of the wing and presence of a black discal spot; more undulate outer margin of the forewing; and a single rather than double eyespot center. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs statewide with the possible exception of the Barrier Islands. Common in the mountains but less so elsewhere.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably multiple broods but our records are continuous and do not show specific flight periods.

HABITAT: The majority of our records come from the Mountains from both mesic habitats, including riparian and cove forests, and from dry ridges. Records from the Coastal Plain are also numerous, primarily from Longleaf Pine savannas, flatwoods, and sandhills, but also from brownwater river floodplains and other stands dominated by hardwoods; appears to be absent, however, from peatlands and maritime habitats. The relatively few Piedmont records we have come from both wetland and dry upland habitats.

FOOD: Larvae are highly polyphagous - one of the few generalist sphingid species feeding on a variety of hardwood trees and shrubs. Wagner (2005) specifically lists serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), birch (*Betula*), American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), chestnut (*Castanea*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*), beech (*Fagus*), apple (*Malus*), American Hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), poplar (*Populus*), cherry (*Prunus*), oak (*Quercus*), rose (*Rosa*), willow (*Salix*), American Basswood (*Tilia americana*), and elm (*Ulmus*). In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded feeding on Downy Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), cherry, and oak.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes regularly to 15 watt UV lights, usually as single individuals but occasionally in multiples; does not nectar at flowers or come to fermented 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: With its statewide distribution, wide range of host plants, and broad habitat use, this species appears to be secure.