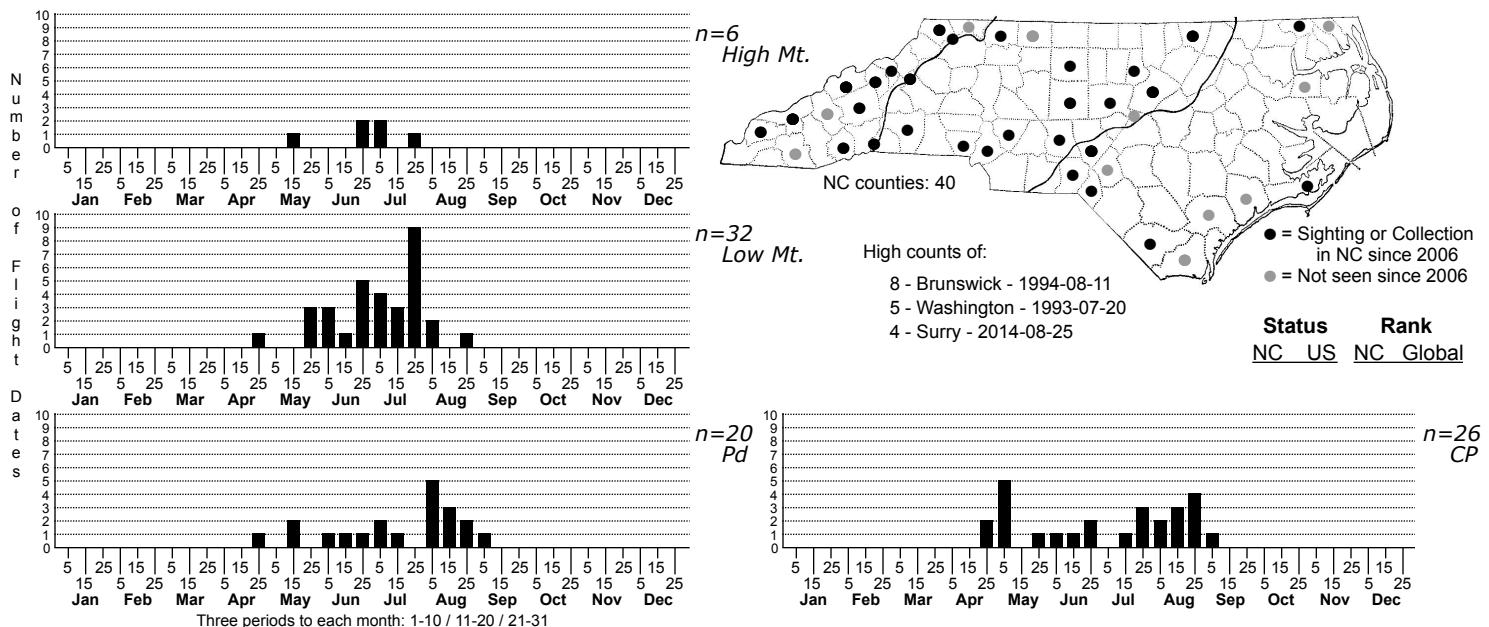


# *Paonias astylus* Huckleberry Sphinx



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)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

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

ID COMMENTS: With narrow forewings that cover only the eyespot on the hindwings when at rest, leaving the outer margin of the hindwing projecting forward, this is clearly a *< i>Paonias</i>* species. The relatively smooth brown ground color, shaded with light gray or lavender, is distinctive, as is the completely straight outer margin of the forewing. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs statewide with the possible exception of the Barrier Islands.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have a two flights in the Mountains and possibly three in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

HABITAT: Our records come from a wide variety of heath-containing habitats. These include Wet Pine Flatwoods, Pocosins, and dry-to-xeric Pine-Scrub Oak Sandhills in the Coastal Plain; dry Pine-Oak-Heath habitats in the Piedmont and lower Mountains; and Heath Balds in the High Mountains.

FOOD: Larvae are stenophagous, feeding on blueberries (*< i>Vaccinium</i>*) and huckleberries (*< i>Gaylussacia</i>*), both in the Ericaceae. As of 2024, our only feeding record is for Dangleberry (*< i>Gaylussacia frondosa</i>*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Like other members of the genus adults of this species are attracted to lights but have not been recorded visiting flowers nor coming to baits.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4G5 SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: Once considered to be quite rare, this species is taken in light traps with regularity each year. Although a specialist on heath-containing habitats, it is not restricted with regard to moisture regime or presence/absence of a canopy cover; several different heaths appear to be used across the state. Although somewhat vulnerable to the effects of habitat fragmentation, this species appears to be fairly secure.