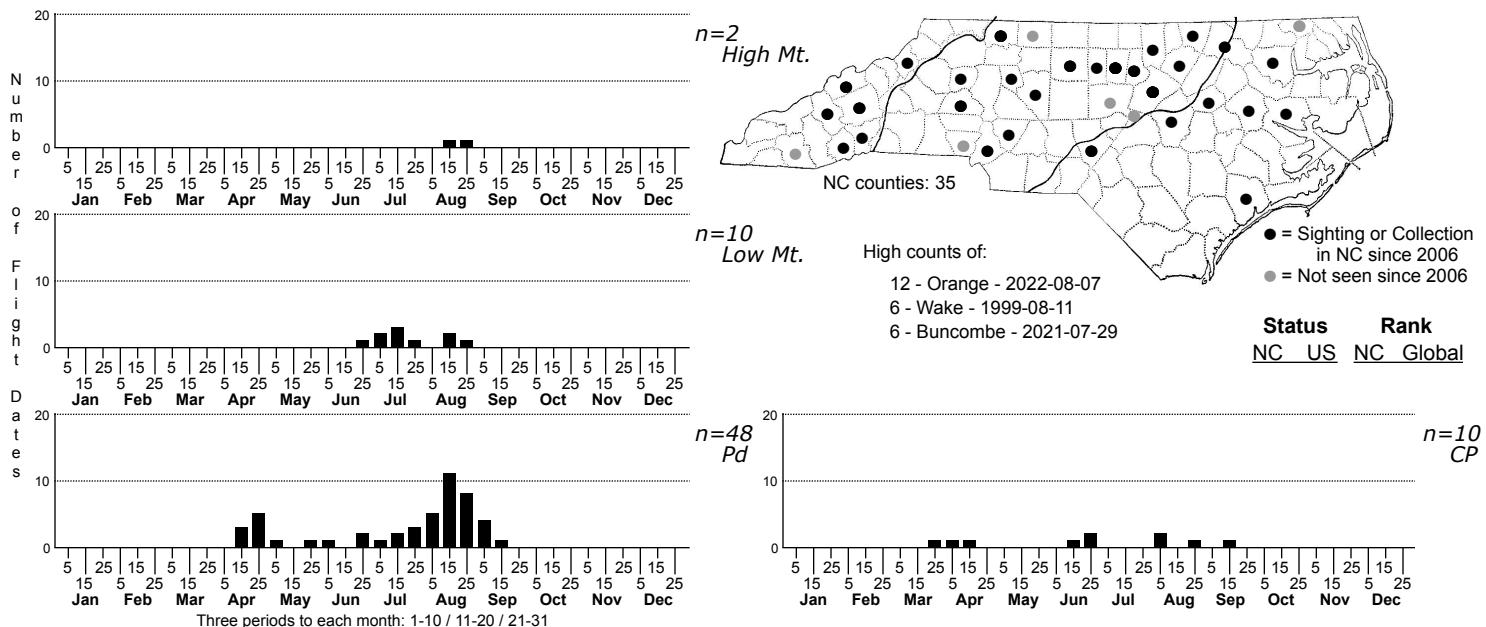


Hemaris thysbe Hummingbird Clearwing



FAMILY: Sphingidae **SUBFAMILY:** Macroglossinae **TRIBE:** Dilophonotini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: A Holarctic genus of 20 species of which 5 occur in North America and 4 in North Carolina. They are often called hummingbird or bumblebee moths, and are among the best known sphingids to North Carolinians.

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: These moths are often believed to be birds or large bees by the public; their ability to hover and rapidly fly away are impressive. *Hemaris thysbe* has a greenish thorax and is marked with crimson on its wings and abdomen; fore legs are white. Sexes are similar. Resembles *H. gracilis* but is larger and the clear area in both wings has a scalloped rather than even outer edge; in mounted specimens, the cell in the forewing has a line of scales running through it which is absent in *H. gracilis*. *Hemaris diffinis* has a yellowish thorax and the area devoid of scales is much larger in the hindwing than in either *H. thysbe* or *H. gracilis*. Leg color also differs between all three species: forelegs are white in *H. thysbe*, red in *H. gracilis*, and black in *H. diffinis*.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs statewide, although records are missing from the Barrier Islands and High Mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: In the piedmont and coastal plain there appear to be two broods.

HABITAT: Adults are often seen in gardens and other open, flower-rich habitats. The wooded or shrubby habitats used by the larvae range from dry acidic sandhills and mountain ridges where blueberries are abundant to rich bottomlands and mesic slopes where viburnums are prevalent.

FOOD: Polyphagous, feeding on *Viburnum* but also on honeysuckles (*Lonicera*) and various members of the Rosaceae (Forbes, 1948; Wagner, 2005). Tuttle (2007) adds blueberries and cranberry, both in the Ericaceae, although exactly which species are used in any area is uncertain. In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded feeding on Southern Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), Northern Arrowwood (*V. recognitum*), and Possumhaw Viburnum (*V. nudum*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: The moths are diurnal and do not come to light traps. Look for the adults visiting flowers, often in open areas but usually near wooded areas where their host plants occur. They do not come to bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: Its widespread occurrence across the state and use of a broad range of habitats makes this species relatively secure.