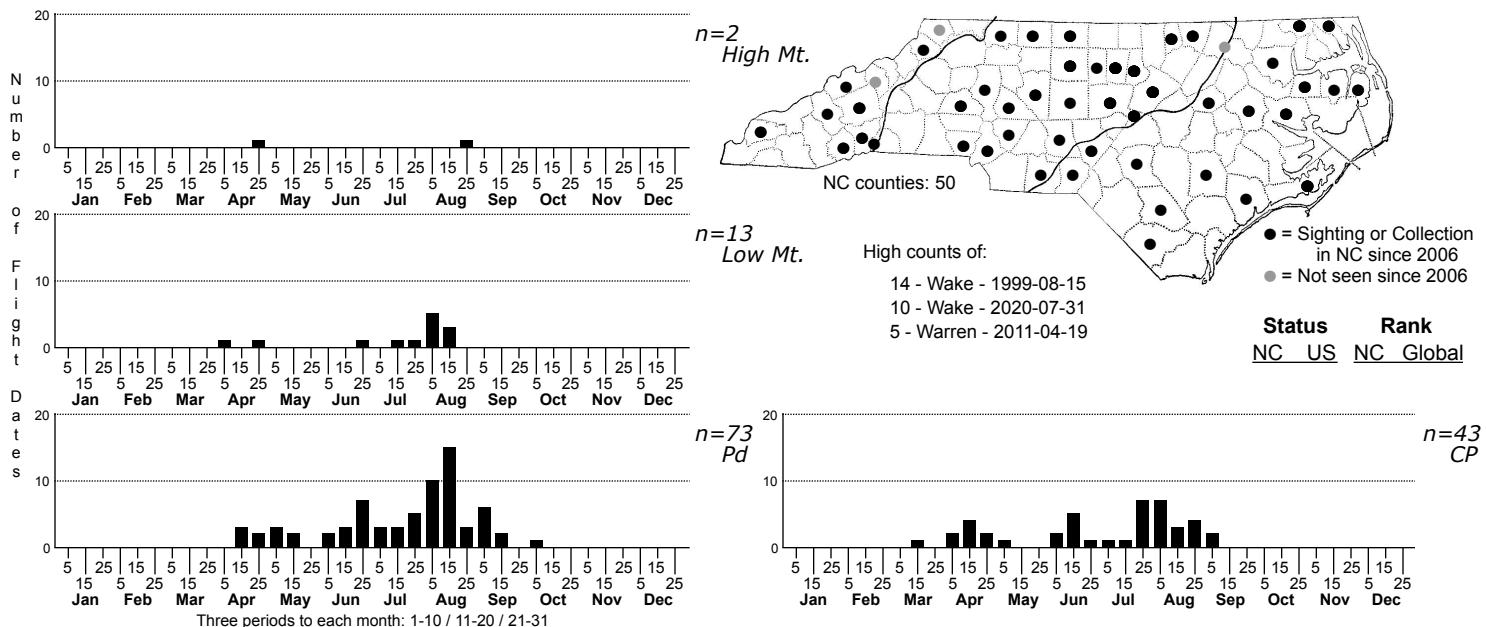


Hemaris diffinis Snowberry Clearwing



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: Adults have a yellowish thorax and probably are mimics of bumblebees or carpenter bees; they can also be recognized by the narrow black margin to the clear area on the hindwing -- in our other two species the black border is quite wide. The legs are black in *Hemaris diffinis* but white in *H. thysbe* and reddish in *H. gracilis*. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Records from the Mountains are few but the species is certainly common across the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably two broods over most of the state.

HABITAT: Records for adults come from a variety of open habitats, ranging from Barrier Islands, beaver pond wetlands, to open fields and gardens. Larvae may occur anywhere where honeysuckles grow, which includes most wooded areas in the state as well as ruderal lands and other disturbed habitats.

FOOD: Larvae are oligophagous, feeding on members of the Caprifoliaceae, including honeysuckles and snowberry. Wagner (2007) reports dogbane and *Amsonia* are also foodplants. In North Carolina, we have larval records from both native Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) and the exotic, invasive Japanese Honeysuckle (*L. japonica*). Although Coral Honeysuckle is presumably the original native host, it has become far less common than Japanese Honeysuckle in North Carolina, which by acreage may be the most widespread plant in the state (Vascular Plants of North Carolina website). In this case, larvae do not seem picky about native vs. introduced species, and are commonly found on Japanese Honeysuckle.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Diurnal, the species does not fly at night nor visit bait. Like butterflies, this species should be sought nectaring at flowers. Look for adults visiting flowers in fields and gardens that border or are close to wooded areas and fencerows where honeysuckle is growing.

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: Its statewide occurrence and use of a wide range of habitat types, including developed areas, makes it secure in the state. Furthermore, its adoption of introduced Japanese Honeysuckle as a host gives it a food source that has become abundant statewide.