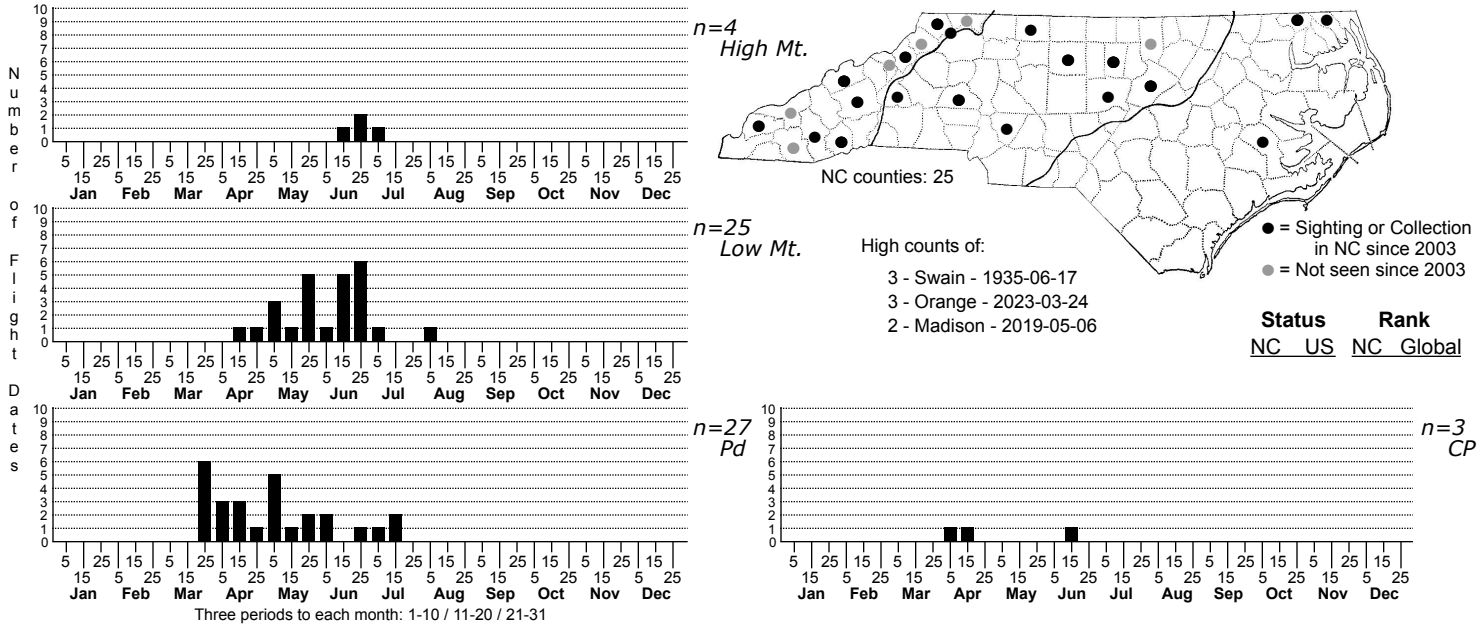
Sphecodina abbottii Abbot's Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Macroglossinae TRIBE: Macroglossini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: A genus of two species but only one in our area and the other in the eastern Palearctic.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)
ONLINE PHOTOS: MPG, Bugguide, BAMONA
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948); Hodges (1971); Tuttle (2007)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1948); Wagner (2005); Tuttle (2007)

ID COMMENTS: One of the smaller Sphinx moths, the dark brown or gray, longitudinally-streaked forewing and yellow-edged hindwing are unmistakable. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Potentially occurs statewide but records are widely scattered in time and location.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably single brooded with flights in April and May in the Coastal Plain and June-July in the Mountains and Piedmont.

HABITAT: Our records come hardwood-dominated habitats, including bottomlands in the Coastal Plain and both mesic and dry forested habitats in the Mountains and Piedmont. We have no records from maritime, peatland, or Longleaf Pine habitat types.

FOOD: Stenophagous. Larvae feed on members of the Vitaceae, including grapes and Virginia Creeper.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults visit flowers and sap flows and there are also reports from carrion and feces; we have no records, however, from bait, although that would seem the most promising way to sample for them. While we have a few records from 15 watt UV lights, the scarcity of records suggests that higher intensity lights, such as mercury-vapor, may be needed to accurately assess its distribution and abundance. Larvae can be found by searching through grape tangles.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 [SU]

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

COMMENTS: North Carolina records are scarce but habitat and host plants do not appear to be limiting factors. The populations of this species must fluctuate from year to year for they are sometimes quite common and then disappear. More effective sampling approaches need to be developed before the status of this species can be determined.