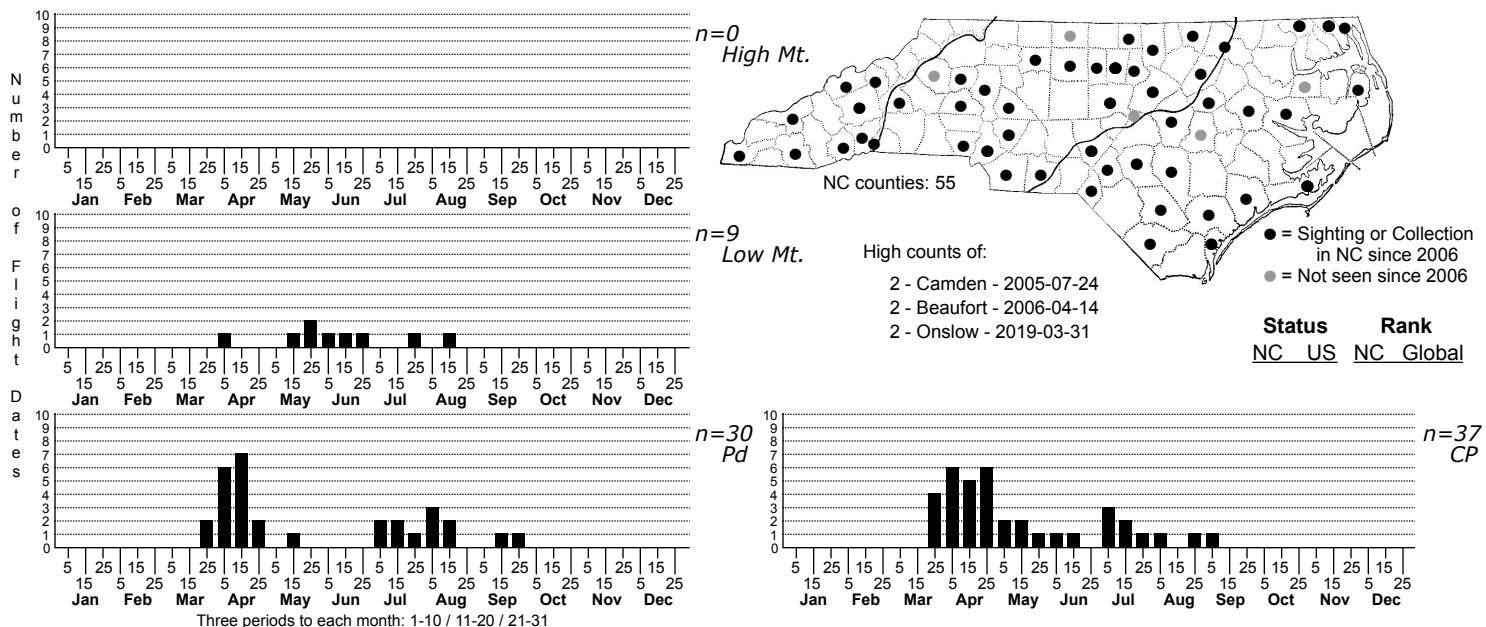


# *Amphion floridensis* Nessus Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Macroglossinae TRIBE: Macroglossini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: The only member of this genus.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

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

ID COMMENTS: A small day-flying Sphinx. Like *Hemaris* species, *Amphion* is a bumblebee/hummingbird mimic, possessing two distinctive yellow rings on its abdomen and a tuft of feather-like scales at the tip of the abdomen; unlike *Hemaris*, however, the wings are opaque rather than transparent, brown on the forewings and reddish on the hindwings. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Potentially occurs statewide, though more data are needed on its exact habitats.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably has two broods.

HABITAT: Many of our records come from barrier islands where grape tangles occur in dune habitats. Elsewhere, our records come primarily from wet to mesic hardwood-dominated forests. The widespread distribution of its host plants suggests that it could be found in a range of habitats.

FOOD: Larvae are stenophagous, feeding on members of the Vitaceae. Wagner (2005) lists grape (*Vitis*), Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), and peppervine (*Ampelopsis*). In North Carolina, we have observed larvae feeding on grape and Virginia Creeper.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Look for this species in the daytime or at dusk visiting flowers. Also visits fruit, feces, sap and wet sand. It responds well to fermented baits and traps often demonstrate that the species can be quite common in area where it has otherwise never been seen. None of our records come from lights.

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: This species is far less commonly observed than *Hemaris thysbe* or *H. diffinis*, two other day-flying species that visit flowers. Use of baits during its daytime flight period may provide a more accurate picture of its distribution and abundance within the state. The frequency of citizen scientist records suggests that the species may relatively common, but undersampled due to its diurnal habits.