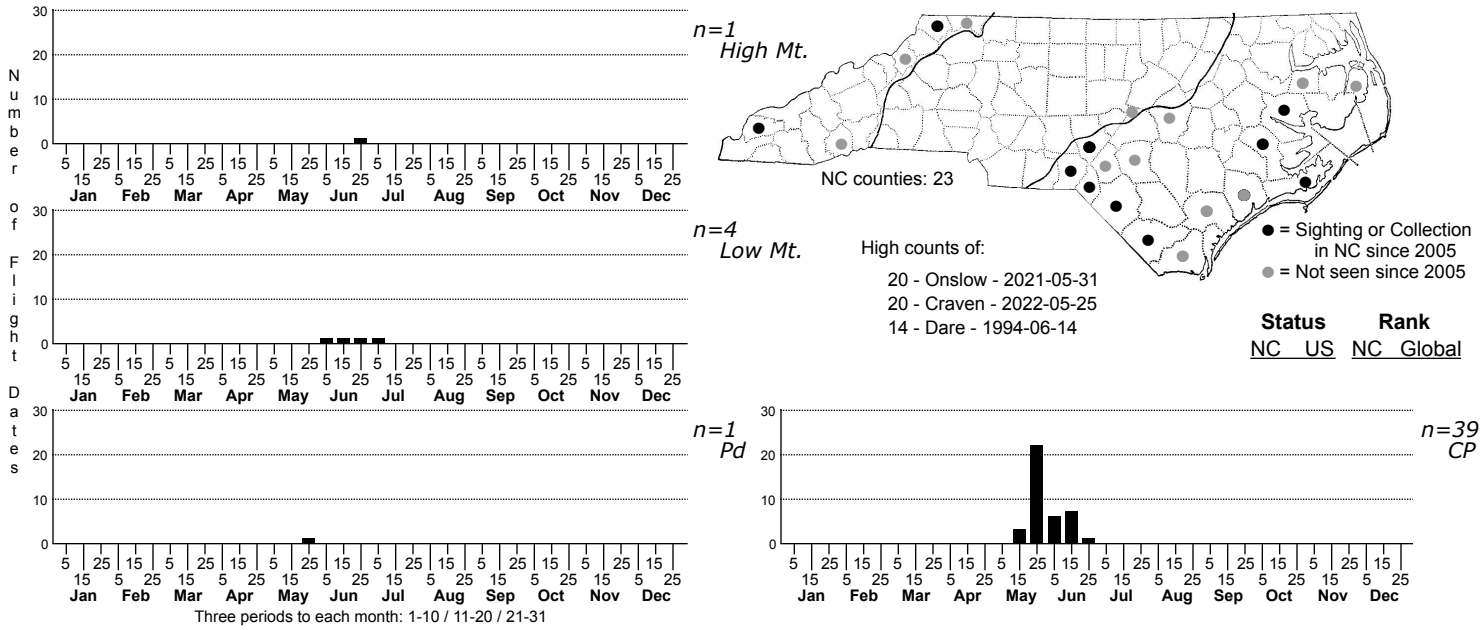
Haploa colona Colona Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of six species currently recognized in North America, all of which occur in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1960)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1960); Wagner (2005)

ID COMMENTS: Adults are nearly unmistakeable, at least where the hindwings and abdomen are visible. Hind-wings are bright orange or yellow, which is true only for this species and clymene among the Haploas. The forewings are cream or whitish and outlined on all margins with black (usually interrupted at the wing angles). Unlike H. clymene, which usually has only a single strong black spur projecting into the middle of the wing from the inner margin, colona lacks that spur and instead resembles the other species of Haploa in having lines or spurs that project downward from the coastal margin. The pattern in colona is particularly similar to that of reversa, where a dark line runs diagonally from the before the midpoint on the costal margin all the way to the anal angle, usually with two other dark lines running from the costa to the diagonal line and two narrower lines running from the diagonal line to the outer margin, dividing the apex of the wing into several white spots. Some forms of colona are virtually all white on the forewings, but the orange hindwings usually serve to distinguish this species from similar forms found in the other Haploas (clymene apparently does not have a form with all white or cream forewings). In some forms, the hindwings may also be completely pale cream-color, but not as white as in the all-white forms of other Haploas; the abdomen is also usually orange in colona, without a strong mid-dorsal dark line.

DISTRIBUTION: May have a bimodal distribution in the state, with the majority of our records coming from the Coastal Plain but also a few from the Mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have a single, mid-summer flight period in all parts of the state

HABITAT: Wagner (2005) lists habitats as "open areas, wetlands, and woodland." In North Carolina, most of our records come from Longleaf Pine habitats, including both wet savannas and dry-to-xeric sandhills. Other Coastal Plain records come from peatlands but not from barrier islands or other tidewater habitats. Habitats used in the Mountains are less certain, but records come from both riparian areas (e.g., New River State Park) and dry ridges (e.g., Grandfather Mountain).

FOOD: Larvae are probably polyphagous, feeding on many species of herbaceous and woody plants, but possibly preferring species in the Asteraceae and Boraginaceae (Forbes, 1960; Wagner, 2005). Covell (1984) specifically lists hackberry (Celtis), ash (Fraxinus), apple (Malus), Peach (Prunus persica), and elm (Ulmus). In North Carolina, Ed Corey has reared a larva from Juncus.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Comes moderately well to blacklights, but none of our records come from bait; flushes easily during the day and appears to be at least partially diurnal

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: Appears to be less common and more of a habitat specialist than H. clymene, and consequently probably more vulnerable to the effects of habitat loss and fragmentation. Nonetheless, it is found in two widely separated areas of the state and occupies what appears to be a fairly wide range of habitats. Although more information is needed on its distribution in the Piedmont and on its habitat uses in the western part of the state more generally, this species appears to be at least somewhat secure within the state.