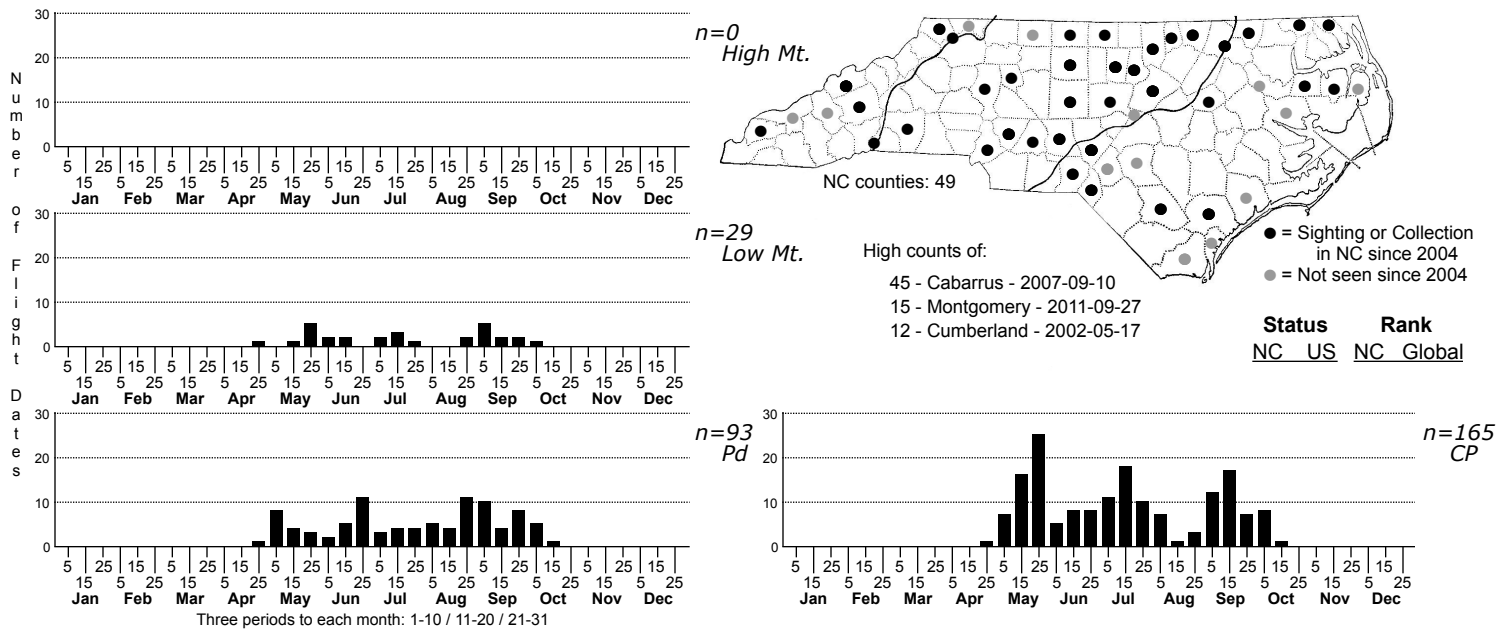


## *Virbia aurantiaca* Orange Holomelina Moth



FAMILY: Erebiidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: One of fourteen species in North America, five of which occur in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984; as *Holomelina aurantiaca*); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1960); Zaspel et al. (2008)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1960); Wagner (2005)

ID COMMENTS: *Virbia aurantiaca* is one of several small brownish- or yellowish-orange *Virbias*, all of which may be difficult to distinguish, particularly based on photographs alone; this is especially true for shots showing just the forewings. The forewings are generally yellowish-brown, with a darker discal spot and sub-median band sometimes apparent. The hindwings are a bright orange or pink in both sexes, differing from *opella* in this respect, in which the males typically have dark hindwings. There is usually a dark discal spot and a fairly wide black band running along the outer margin. These blackish areas are more sharply defined and less irregular than in females of *opella*. Males of *rubicundaria*, conversely, lack dark markings on the hindwing and are generally smaller and brighter than in *aurantiaca*; dissection may be needed, however, to distinguish pale, unmarked forms of male *aurantiaca* from *rubicundaria* (see Forbes, 1960; and Zaspel et al., 2008 for illustrations and descriptions). Female *aurantiaca* and *rubicundaria* are more likely to be confused (Zaspel et al., 2008), since both have dark markings on the hindwing; female *rubicundaria* are again generally smaller and brighter pinkish-orange than *aurantiaca*.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs statewide except possibly the High Mountains and barrier islands

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have three fairly distinct flights

HABITAT: Found in most open and forested habitats in the state except from barrier islands and the High Mountains. We have records from peatlands; Longleaf Pine savannas, flatwoods, sandhills, and sandhill seeps; floodplain forests; and dry ridges.

FOOD: Host plant use has apparently not been observed in the wild (Zaspel et al., 2008), but probably feeds on low forbs, as reported for other members of this genus (see Forbes, 1960 and Wagner, 2005).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: Comes moderately well to blacklights, usually in small numbers but with up to 45 collected in a single trap. Adults do not feed, so do not come to bait. Most *Virbias* can be flushed from their habitats during the day, indicating they are at least partially diurnal (Zaspel et al., 2008)

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 [S5]

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

COMMENTS: Given its abundance, widespread distribution, and generalized habitat use, this species appears to be secure in the state.