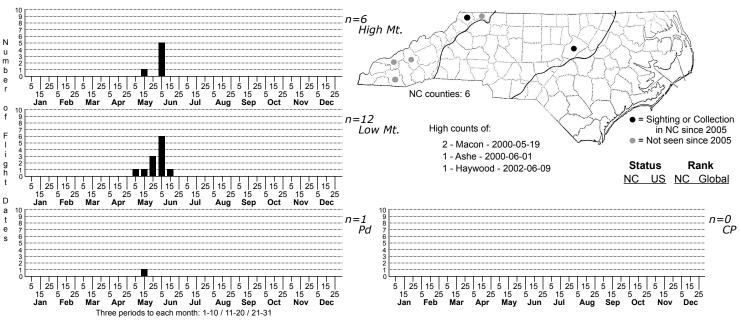
Spilosoma latipennis Pink-legged Tiger Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of eight species in this genus found in North America, four of which have been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012) ONLINE PHOTOS: TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1960) TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1960); Wagner (2005)

ID COMMENTS: A nearly pure white moth with distinctive pink markings on the coxae and femora of the front legs; other white tiger moths, including other species of Spilosoma, Estigmene, and Hyphantria, have yellow on their fore-legs instead of pink (at least in our area). Apart from the pink markings, however, latipennis is similar to several of those species. Where the top of the abdomen can be seen, it is pure white in latipennis but marked with yellow or orange and with black in S. virginica, S. dubia, and E. acrea. Both S. congrua and H. cunea, however, also have white abdomens, although they are often much more heavily spotted than in S. latipennis. Lightly marked individuals of those species may be difficult to distinguish from S. latipennis without a view of the fore-legs, although H. cunea is much smaller and S. congrua slightly smaller, which may be difficult to determine from a photograph alone.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably restricted to the Mountains; records from other regions of the state need to be verified

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have a single, early summer flight

HABITAT: Records from the Mountains come from primarily from slopes and ridges, with only a few from riparian areas (e.g., New River State Park).

FOOD: Larvae are probably polyphagous, like other members of this genus, feeding on a wide range of herbaceous and woody plants (Forbes, 1960; Wagner, 2005). Reported hosts include ash (<i>Fraxinus</i>), <i>Impatiens</i>, plantain (<i>Plantago</i>), and dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>) (Covell, 1984). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Appears to come somewhat poorly to blacklights, with only single specimens being collected in light traps. None have been recorded at bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 SNR [S1S2]

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

COMMENTS: We currently only have five sites where this species has been observed recently. This species is far less frequently observed than $\langle i \rangle$ Spilosoma congrua $\langle i \rangle$ or $\langle i \rangle$ S. virginica $\langle i \rangle$, even in the mountains, where the range of all three species overlap. Although there is no indication that $\langle i \rangle$ S. latipennis $\langle i \rangle$ is specialized in terms of its habitat, more needs to be learned about its distribution, abundance, and habitat preferences in North Carolina before its conservation status can be determined.