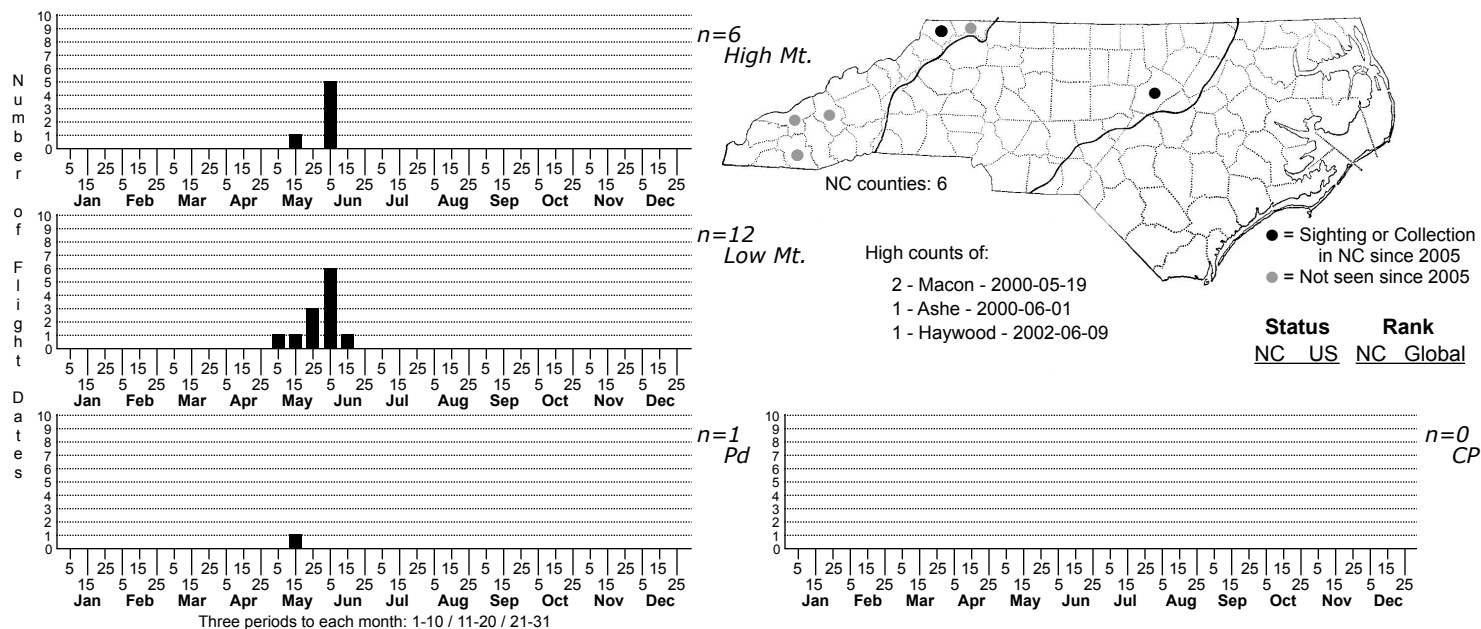


Spilosoma latipennis Pink-legged Tiger Moth



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 <i>Spilosoma congrua</i> or <i>S. virginica</i>, even in the mountains, where the range of all three species overlap. Although there is no indication that <i>S. latipennis</i> 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.