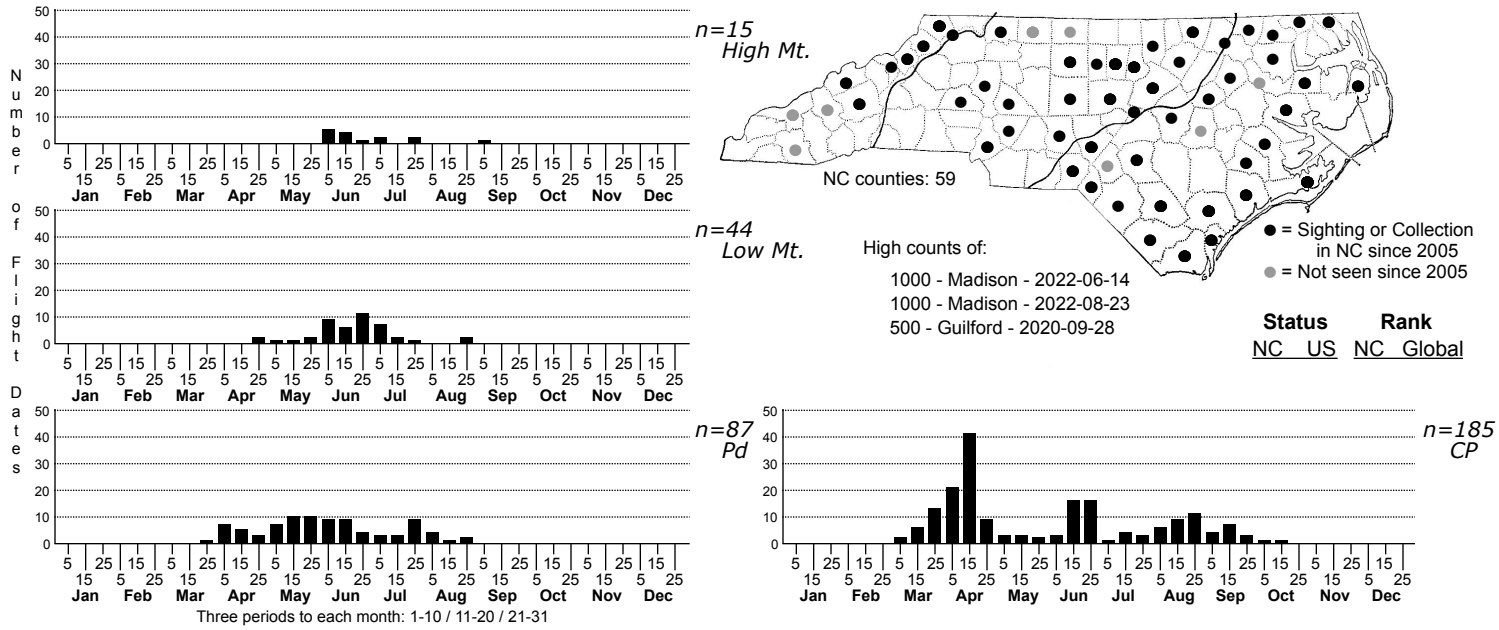
# ***Hyphantria cunea*** Fall Webworm Moth




FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: The only member of its genus in North America. Two species, cunea and textor, have been recognized in the past (e.g., Brimley, 1938; Forbes, 1960), but only cunea is considered valid now (Hodges, et al., 1983).

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: Adults are white with variable amounts of black spotting. They are typically smaller but similar to Spilosoma species, also possessing yellow on fore-coxae and femora like all but S. latipennis. Particularly similar to S. congrua, with both possessing all white abdomens and overlapping in size. The antennal shaft of Hyphantria is typically black, however (at least in the typical form, Forbes, 1960), whereas it is usually white in Spilosoma species (Forbes also describes form textor of Hyphantria as having white shafts). Hyphantria are also usually smaller, slimmer, and occasionally much darker than Spilosoma.

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs statewide (Brimley, 1938)

FLIGHT COMMENT: Has three broods in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain but the pattern is less clear in the Mountains

HABITAT: Wagner (2005) lists the habitats of this species as "yards and parks, fields, fencerows, woodlands, and forests." In North Carolina, it is found in most habitats that possess hardwood trees, including maritime and coastal fringe forests, sandhills, floodplains, mesic slopes, and dry ridges and summits.

FOOD: Larvae are polyphagous, but feed primarily on hardwood trees, unlike most other members of the Arctiinae, and have been recorded from over 400 species of hardwoods (Wagner, 2005). In North Carolina, we have observed it feeding on a wide range of hardwoods, including ash (Fraxinus), birch (Betula), blueberry (Vaccinium), cherry (Prunus), cypress (Taxodium), hawthorn (Crataegus), hickory (Carya), holly (Ilex), hornbeam (Carpinus), maple (Acer), mulberry (Morus), persimmon (Diospyros), privet (Ligustrum), redbud (Cercis), sourwood (Oxydendrum), sweetgum (Liquidambar), sycamore (Platanus), tupelo (Nyssa), walnut (Juglans), and willow (Salix). While females seem to have preferences for certain trees (such as Sweetgum) for oviposition, after the early communal feeding stages, larvae disperse and can be found eating pretty much any nearby tree (as well as some non-trees). We also have feeding records for Muscadine (Muscadinia rotundifolia), Virginia Creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia), blackberry (Rubus), and Peppervine (Ampelopsis arborea).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Populations are easily detected by the communal webs made by the larvae. Adults come well to blacklights, with up to 90 being collected in a single trap. None have been recorded at bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S5]

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

COMMENTS: This species is abundant, widespread, and makes use of a wide variety of habitats across the state, including wooded residential areas. It appears to be quite secure.