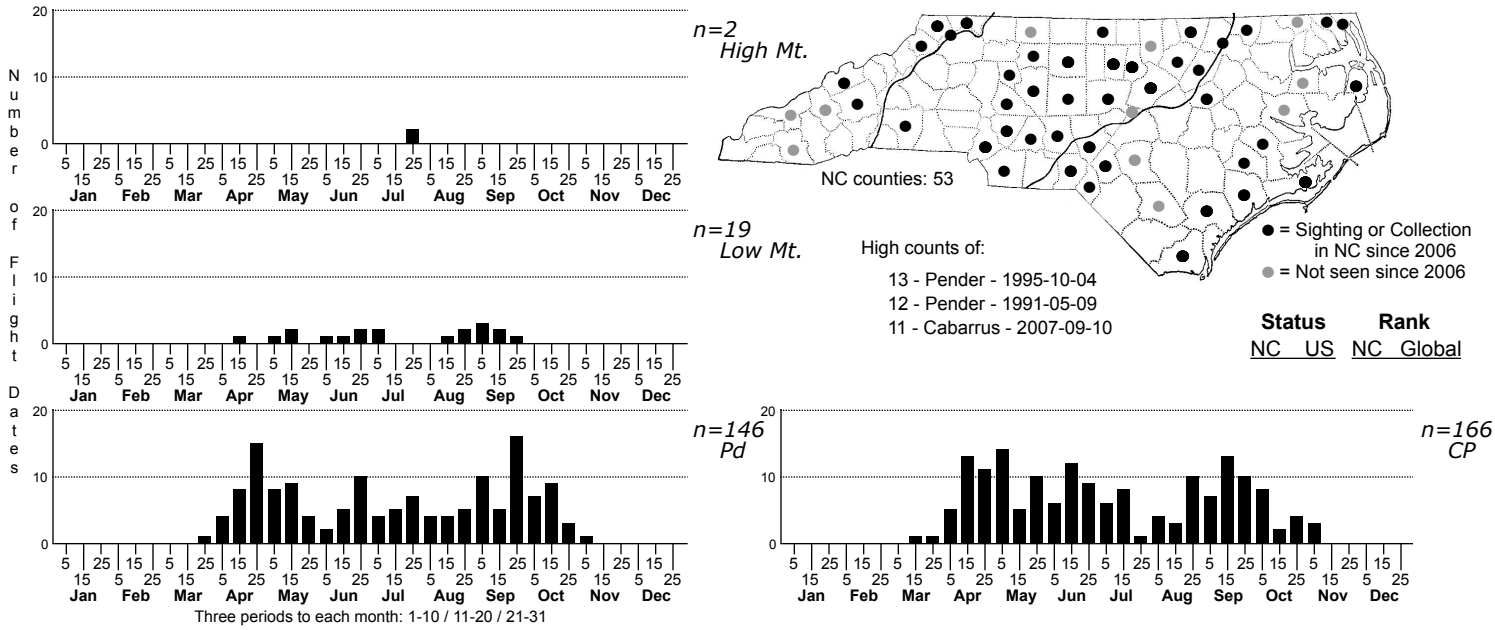
Apantesis phalerata Harnessed Tiger Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: The genus Apantesis is represented by 43 species in North America, including 13 species 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)

ID COMMENTS: Species of Apantesis and Grammia resemble one another, but Apantesis are generally smaller and the pattern of yellow lines is usually much more reduced, with the median, lower portion of the post-median, and fine vein lines always missing in Apantesis; a good quality photograph showing the forewing pattern is usually enough to distinguish between these genera. However, the hindwings must also be visible to distinguish between the species of Apantesis, and even then only the males can usually be diagnosed; photographs must show the hindwings to be acceptable as records for this genus. (Note: The species formerly in the genus Grammia have been moved to Apantesis).
Male A. phalerata are usually recognizable by a cream or pinkish-yellow wash on the hindwings and a sparse band of small subterminal spots; in the other species, the ground color is usually a brighter or more solid yellow or red and the subterminal spots are larger or more confluent. Some males, however, may have larger spots or a brighter color on the hindwings. Questionable males can be easily distinguished by dissection: in A. phalerata, there is a conspicuous process at the end of the valve and usually a pair of posteriorly-pointing spines at the distal end of the aedeagus (see illustrations in Forbes, 1960). Females of A. phalerata are similar to those of A. vittata, A. phalerata, and A. nais, having a highly reduced set of pale lines on the forewings and broad, confluent black bands along the outer and inner margins of the hindwing. All three of these species can also have red or pink in the medial and basal areas of the hindwing and it is probably better to rely on males -- which are more often captured in any case -- for identifications.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs statewide.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have two main flight periods over most of the state: spring-mid summer and late summer-fall.

HABITAT: Most of our records come from fairly open habitats, including dune grasslands on barrier islands; Longleaf Pine savannas, flatwoods, and sandhills; old fields; and dry upland forests. A few records, however, also come from peatlands and bottomland forests.

FOOD: Larvae are probably polyphagous, feeding on a wide range of plants. Reported hosts include plantain (Plantago), Saltmeadow Cordgrass (Spartina patens), Common Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale), clover (Trifolium), and Corn (Zea mays) (Tietz, 1972). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Males come moderately well to blacklights, with up to 13 collected in a single trap; females are much more rarely collected. Does not come to 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 occupies a wide range of habitats and is broadly distributed across the entire state. Appears to be quite secure.