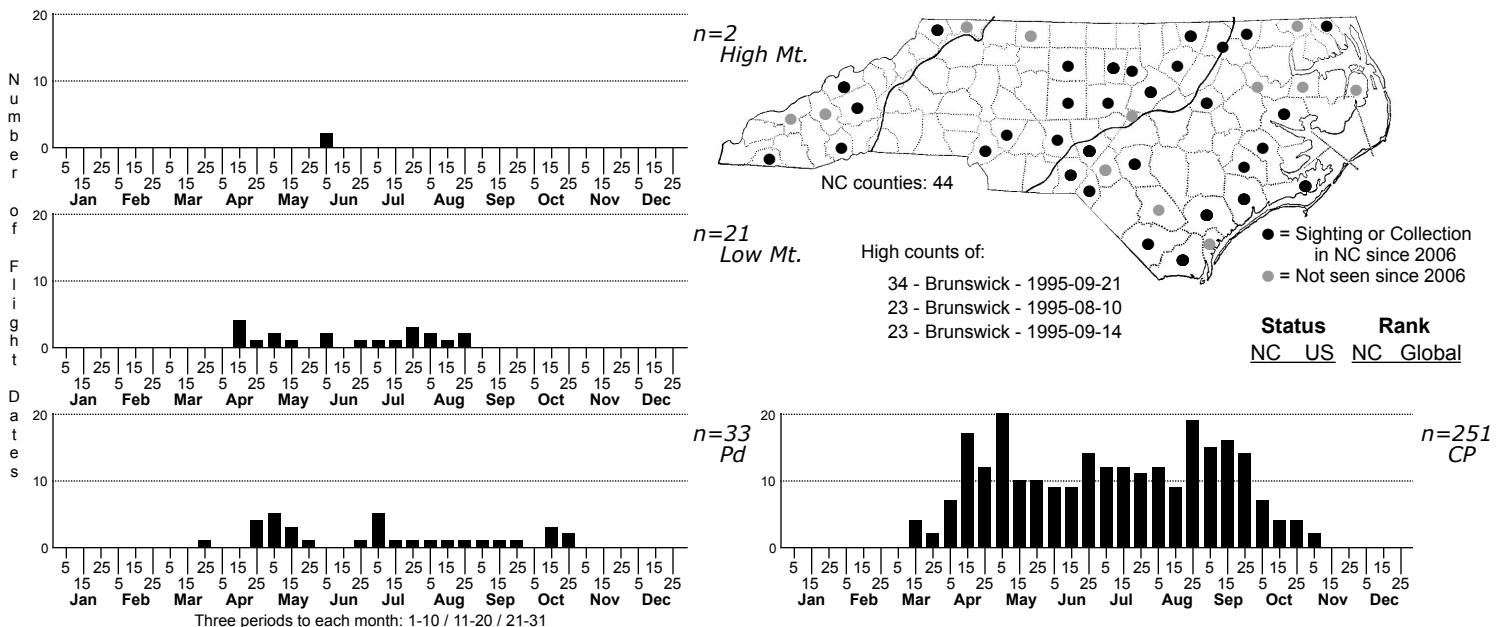


Apantesis vittata Banded Tiger Moth



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)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1960)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: (Larval descriptions appear to be lacking)

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. vittata* are usually recognizable by having red hindwings with a broad, confluent band of black in the sub-terminal area. In *A. carlotta* and *A. phalerata*, the color of the male hindwings is usually pale yellow or orange, or cream-color with a reddish wash, and the black area in the sub-terminal is virtually always broken into discrete spots. Male *A. nais* that have a bright yellow hindwing with large subterminal spots are easy to distinguish from *A. vittata*. However, *A. nais* also has forms that have reddish or reddish yellow hindwings, some with broadly confluent subterminal black bands; while noticeably larger in some cases, these forms can be difficult to identify, as can specimens of *A. vittata* that have some yellow shading in their hindwings and have their sub-terminal bands more broken into separate spots. Unfortunately, dissection does not provide a more definitive identification: the features of the valves and aedeagus in *A. vittata*, *A. nais*, and *A. carlotta* are all similar, or show similar patterns of variation. Females of *A. vittata* are similar to those of *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: Possibly has three peaks in activity but is present essentially throughout the growing season in the Coastal Plain.

HABITAT: The vast majority of our records come from Longleaf Pine savannas, flatwoods, and sandhills. Other records come from dry upland forests but only a few from floodplain forests and just one from barrier island dune grasslands; none of our records are from pure peatland habitats (i.e., located well away from Longleaf Pine communities).

FOOD: Larvae are probably polyphagous, feeding on a wide range of plants. Covell (1984) list dandelion (*Taraxacum*), and Robinson et al. (2010) list plantain (*Plantago*), but it is unclear whether this is based on ex ova rearing or actual feeding in the wild. We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes moderately well to blacklights, with up to 34 collected in a single trap; no records come from 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: Although apparently less generalized than *A. phalerata*, this species occupies a wide range of habitats and is broadly distributed across the entire state. Appears to be quite secure.