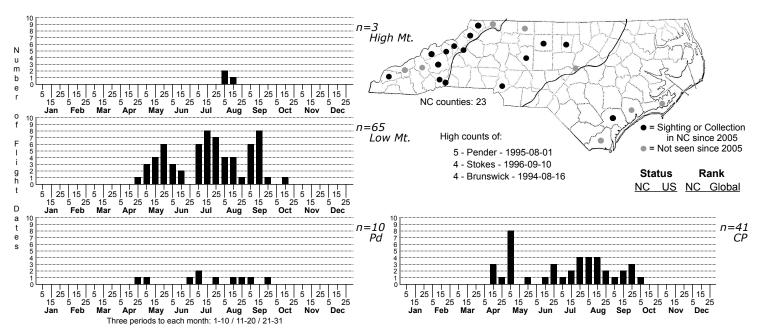
Apantesis carlotta Carlotta's Tiger Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: The genus <i>Apantesis</i> is represented by 43 species in North America, including 13 species in North Carolina. <i>Apantesis carlotta</i> was described fairly recently by Ferguson (1985), who noted the possible existence of additional species in the Middle Atlantic States. Based on conversations we had with Ferguson, we tentatively identified the form associated with Longleaf Pine habitats in the Coastal Plain as separate from the one -- presumably the described species -- that occurs in the Mountains; in the NHP Rare Animal Books up through 2012, this form was referred to as <i>Apantesis new species near carlotta</i> . Apart from the strikingly disjunct distribution, however, there appears to be too little evidence -- including from genetic bar-coding -- to support their continued separation; we treat them here as a single species.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: (Not in either field guide) ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1960); Ferguson (1985)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Ferguson (1985); Wagner (2005)

DISTRIBUTION: Populations may be widely distributed in the Mountains. In the Coastal Plain, they appear to be more restricted to the southern half, including the Fall-line Sandhills. Records are sparse in the Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Ferguson (1985) and Wagner (2005) state that carlotta has two flights, which is consistent with our data.

HABITAT: Ferguson (1985) thought this species was primarily a grassland species, which is consistent with our records. Coastal Plain populations appear to be strongly tied to wet Longleaf Pine savannas, with no records from more xeric habitats; the one record we have from the Fall-line Sandhills was from an extensive seepage slope. Mountain populations appear to be associated with old pastures, or grassy areas along rivers (e.g., New River State Park). At least some of these records come from high elevation meadows (e.g., Purchase Knob, Rich Mountain Gap).

FOOD: Ferguson (1985) reared larvae on weedy composites, but Wagner (2005) just lists forbs. This species is probably polyphagous on many low-growing species of herbaceous plants.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Appears to come to blacklights moderately well but usually in small numbers. Does not come to bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 S3 [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: The Coastal Plain form was previously tracked as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program, due to its tight association with Longleaf Pine savannas, a habitat type that has undergone severe reduction in range historically and which is continuing today. By treating all forms of <i>A. carlotta</i> i> as a single entity, however, the species appears to be more secure in the state, although questions remain to be answered about its distribution, abundance, and habitat specificity across the entire state. Currently, we recommend that this species be placed on the NHP Watch List as a W3 species.