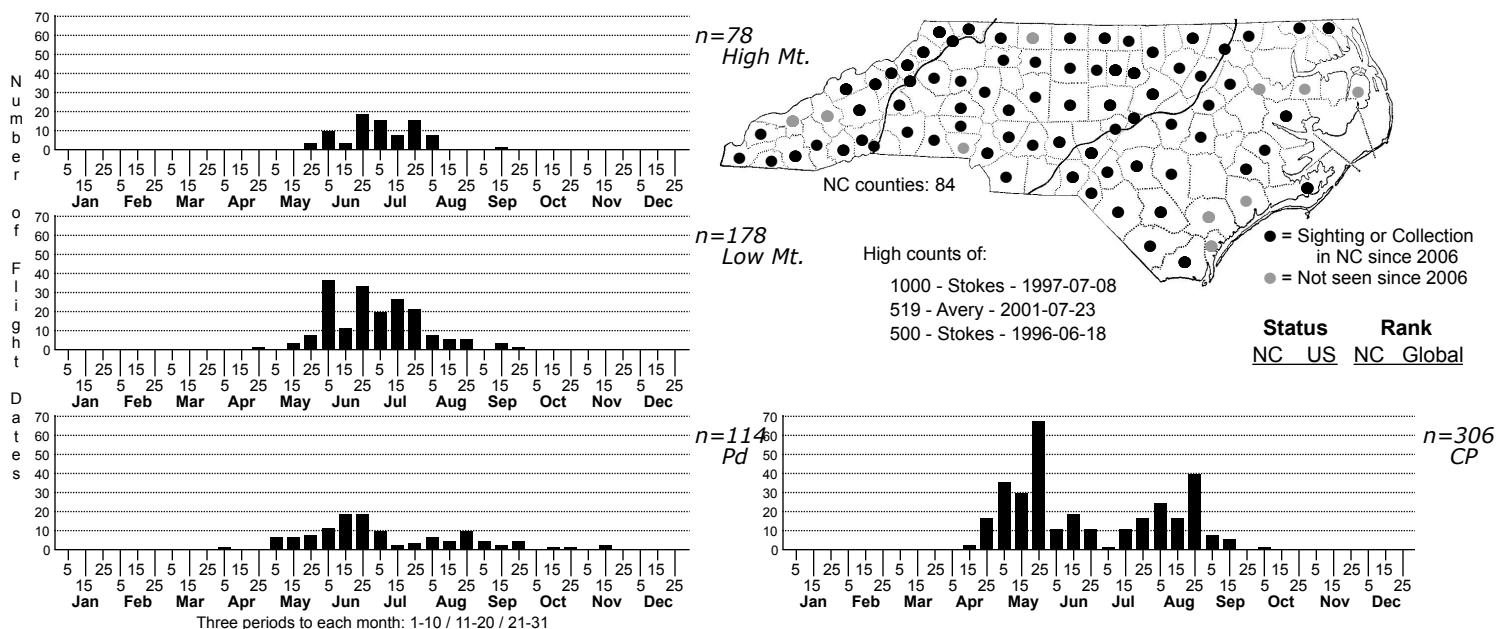


## *Halysidota tessellaris* Banded Tussock Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of five species in this genus that occur in North America (Lafontaine and Schimdt, 20010), three 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: Adults of all three of our species of *Halysidota* are highly similar to one another, possessing long, pointed wings that are translucent yellow and marked with bands of slightly darker, offset cells forming a tessellated pattern. The markings of *tessellaris* and *harrisii* are virtually identical and they cannot be identified based on photographs alone (in some cases, we assume an individual is *tessellaris* if found at a site far from any Sycamores).

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs statewide, though we are missing records for a number of counties in the coastal plain (which may just be a result of undersampling in this area).

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have two flights in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont but probably just one in the Mountains

HABITAT: With the exception of peatlands, where we have only a single record, *H. tessellaris* uses virtually all habitats found in the state, from maritime scrub and forests on the barrier islands, to Longleaf Pine habitats, bottomland hardwoods, to xeric sandhills, barrens and upland ridges and summits.

FOOD: The larvae are polyphagous on woody shrubs and trees (Wagner, 2005). In North Carolina, they have been recorded feeding on Box-elder (*Acer negundo*), Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), Sweet Birch (*Betula lenta*), Bitternut Hickory (*Carya cordiformis*) and other hickories, Sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*), Cockspur Hawthorn (*Crataegus crus-galli*), American Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), ash (*Fraxinus*), American Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Muscadine (*Muscadina rotundifolia*), Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*), Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Black Willow (*Salix nigra*), and Winged Elm (*Ulmus alata*), and likely use many other hosts.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes well to blacklights, with over 30 individuals collected in single traps. Adults feed on flowers beginning at dusk (Forbes, 1960) and for the first few hours after dark, but we have only one record from bait. The adults commonly visit milkweeds at night and may be important pollinators. Frost (1965) examined 1,911 specimens that were captured in light traps and found that 290 specimens had milkweed pollinia attached to them.

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: Ubiquitous, abundant, and widespread across the entire state, this is one of our most secure species