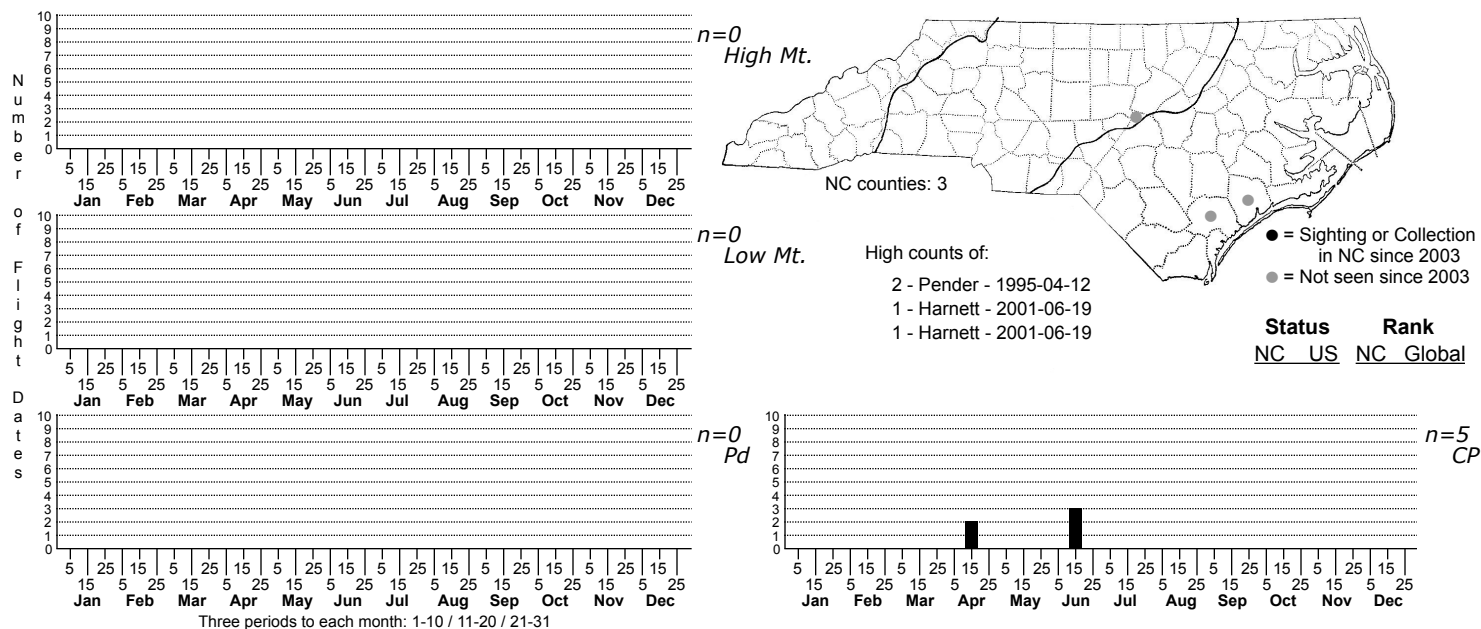


Cycnia inopinatus Unexpected Cycnia Moth



FAMILY: Erebiidae SUBFAMILY: Arctiinae TRIBE: Arctiini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of five species in this genus that occur in North America (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010), four of which have been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS: MPG, Bugguide, BAMONA (larva only)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1960)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1960); Wagner (2005)

ID COMMENTS: Similar in appearance to the other species of *Cycnia*: pale wings with an yellow streak along the costal edge of the forewing; yellow on the head and collar; abdomen yellow or orange with a dorsal row of black spots. *C. inopinatus* is smaller than *C. tenera* and usually with grayish or buffy forewings and with the yellow along the costa ending short of halfway down the wing. The legs are distinctively lead gray (Forbes, 1960), unlike the other species, where the legs are bicolored white and gray or largely whitish.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably restricted to the Coastal Plain

FLIGHT COMMENT: Wagner (2005) states that there are two generations in New Jersey; our records are too few to detect any pattern

HABITAT: Bess (2005) describes *inopinatus* as "typically found in high quality, coastal scrub, dry barrens and similar native grasslands, typically on sand and associated with the Atlantic Coastal Plain or Great Lakes drainage." Our few records are all from open grasslands associated with Longleaf Pine in the Coastal Plain, but come from wet savannas, sandhill seeps, or depression meadows, although with drier sandhills habitats usually located in adjoining areas.

FOOD: Stenophagous, feeding primarily or exclusively on Milkweeds (*Asclepias* sp.) (Forbes, 1960; Wagner, 2005; Bess, 2005). Forbes also mentions records from Sea Ivy (*Cissus trifoliata*), which doesn't occur in our state (except possibly as an introduced species along the coast), and low peas.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: All of our records are from UV light traps, but mostly as single individuals (one sample had two).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 S2S3

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation, however, does not confer any legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: Bess (2005) suspects that habitat fragmentation due to conversion of native grasslands to pastures and other uses, along with suppression of wildfires has led to a significant reduction in the number of viable populations of this species. We agree with his conclusion as well as his recommendation to raise the Global Rank to G2G3.