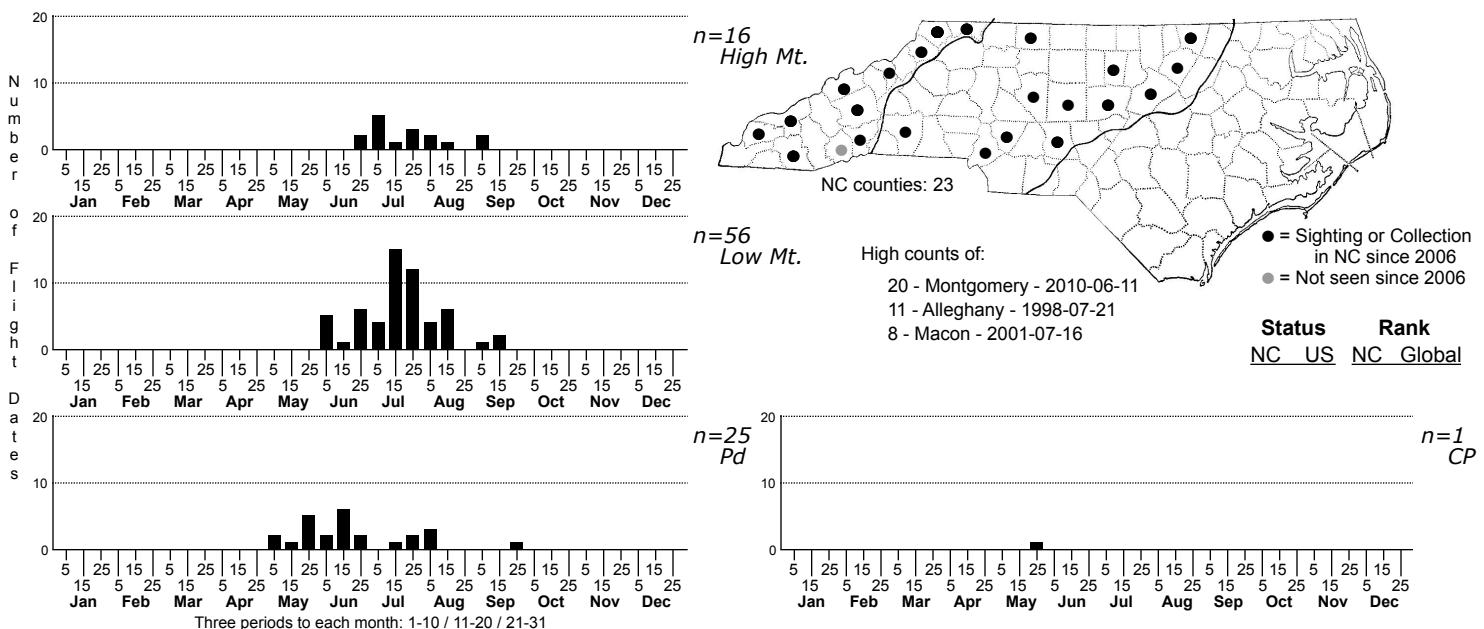


Dasychira basiflava Yellow-based Tussock Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Lymantriinae TRIBE: Orgyiini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of 16 species in this genus that occur in North America, 10 of which have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948); Ferguson (1978)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Both Forbes (1948) and Ferguson (1978) provide keys to the larvae.

ID COMMENTS: Males are mottled. The median area is whitish towards the costa and over the cell but becomes a darker gray-green towards the inner margin; the basal and outer thirds of the wing are a mixture of yellowish, brown, gray-green, fuscous and white, usually with a yellow-brown (luteous) patch near the base in the fold (Forbes, 1948). The lines are fine and black; the postmedian can be somewhat dentate but is generally not sinuous -- concave towards the costa but irregular below the tooth at M3 towards the inner margin (Forbes, 1948). This species is very similar in pattern to *D. meridionalis*, which used to be considered a southern subspecies of *basiflava*. Compared to *meridionalis* (particularly *D. meridionalis memorata*), *basiflava* is larger and with less contrast between the median area and the basal and subterminal areas; it also has a more undulate postmedian (Ferguson, 1978). Barred forms appear to be absent in *meridionalis* but occur in *basiflava*, particularly the females (Ferguson, 1978).

DISTRIBUTION: Ferguson (1978) thought the dividing line between northern *basiflava* and southern *meridionalis* was located somewhere in the middle of North Carolina, giving the range of *meridionalis memorata* from Southern Pines, NC to northern Florida. Our records seem to agree, indicating that *meridionalis* occurs primarily in the southern half of the Coastal Plain in North Carolina, including the Fall-line Sandhills, and that *basiflava* occurs north of the Pamlico Sound in the Coastal Plain as well as the north-central Piedmont and most of the Mountains. A zone of overlap with *meridionalis* may occur in the northern portion of the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to be univoltine, with adults most common in the summer.

HABITAT: Our records come primarily from hardwood forests, including both mesic and dry stands.

FOOD: Larvae are apparently polyphagous. Ferguson (1978) stated they use oaks (*Quercus*) and hickories (*Carya*), with a possible preference for White Oak (*Q. alba*). Captive larvae, however, were also reared on Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and willow (*Salix*), and Wagner (2007) lists blueberry (*Vaccinium*), dogwood (*Cornus*), and other woody species. In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded feeding on oak and American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Our records all come from 15 watt UV light traps. Adults do not feed, so do not come to bait or to flowers. Larvae are distinctive and should be looked for on low-growing trees and shrubs. The hair of all Lymantriinae larvae are possibly urticating, however, and should be handled with care (Ferguson, 1978).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S5]

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

COMMENTS: Appears to be common and widespread in the Mountains and portions of the northern Piedmont. Also feeds on a wide variety of plants and does not appear to be limited by habitat in North Carolina. Seems to be secure in the state.