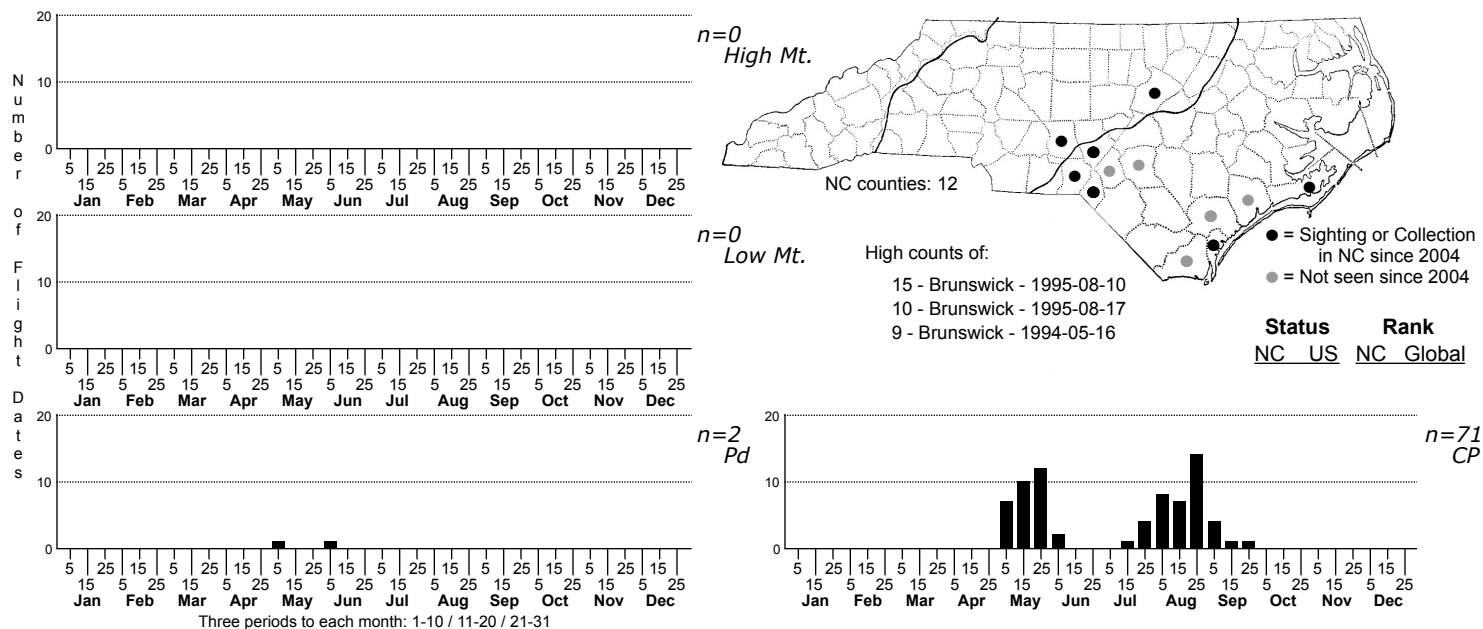


Dasychira leucophaea No common name



FAMILY: Erebiidae 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:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Ferguson (1978)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1948); Ferguson (1978)

ID COMMENTS: Males are a fairly even, greenish-gray, with brown areas bordering the inside of the antemedian and outside of the postmedian. A short basal dash extending out to the antemedian may be present but not the longer bars found in other species. A distinctive round, black and white spot is found in the tornal area, which is only white in males of other species, if there is any mark at all. Females are markedly paler than the males; the median area is pale gray tinged with light brown and there is usually a contrastingly pale bluish-gray or whitish band in the terminal area, just beyond a heavily marked brown and black patch bordering the postmedian. As in the male, a short basal dash may be present, along with the distinctive black-and-white spot in the tornal area.

DISTRIBUTION: Except for one record from Tryon at the edge of the Blue Ridge (mentioned by Forbes, 1948), records from North Carolina come entirely from the Coastal Plain, including some from the Fall-line Sandhills and the majority from the Outer Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to be bivoltine in North Carolina, with a separation between flights in late July.

HABITAT: Virtually all of our records come from Longleaf Pine habitats, particularly sandhills habitats where xerophytic oaks are present. A few, however, also come from savannas or flatwoods where oaks are absent. However, those individuals are likely to represent strays from sandridges located nearby.

FOOD: Both Forbes (1948) and Ferguson (1978) state the larvae feed on oaks. Abbott (cited by Ferguson) said it feeds on Live Oak and Kimball (1965) also reported it feeding on that species; none of our records, however, come from barrier islands where extensive stands of maritime forest are present. Ferguson also reared larvae (apparently ex ovo) on several species of deciduous oaks. Virtually all of our records come from the Coastal Plain from Longleaf Pine habitats and none from areas where deciduous oaks are dominant, e.g., bottomland forests in the Coastal Plain and upland habitats in the Piedmont and Mountains. Many of our records, moreover, come from sandhills habitats where evergreen, xerophytic oaks are likely to be the hosts. However, we have far fewer records from the Fall-line Sandhills, where sandhills habitats are most widespread, than we do from the Outer Coastal Plain where such habitats are more limited. More work needs to be done to document the species that are actually used. As Ferguson noted, the larvae are quite distinctive and should be looked for more extensively.

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: 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: This species appears to be a specialist on sandhills habitats containing xerophytic oaks. While its host plants are somewhat resistant to both fire and to fire suppression, upland habitats are prone to conversion to silviculture and other uses. Most of the habitats where this species has been documented are in large areas of protected habitats, particularly lands used by the military.