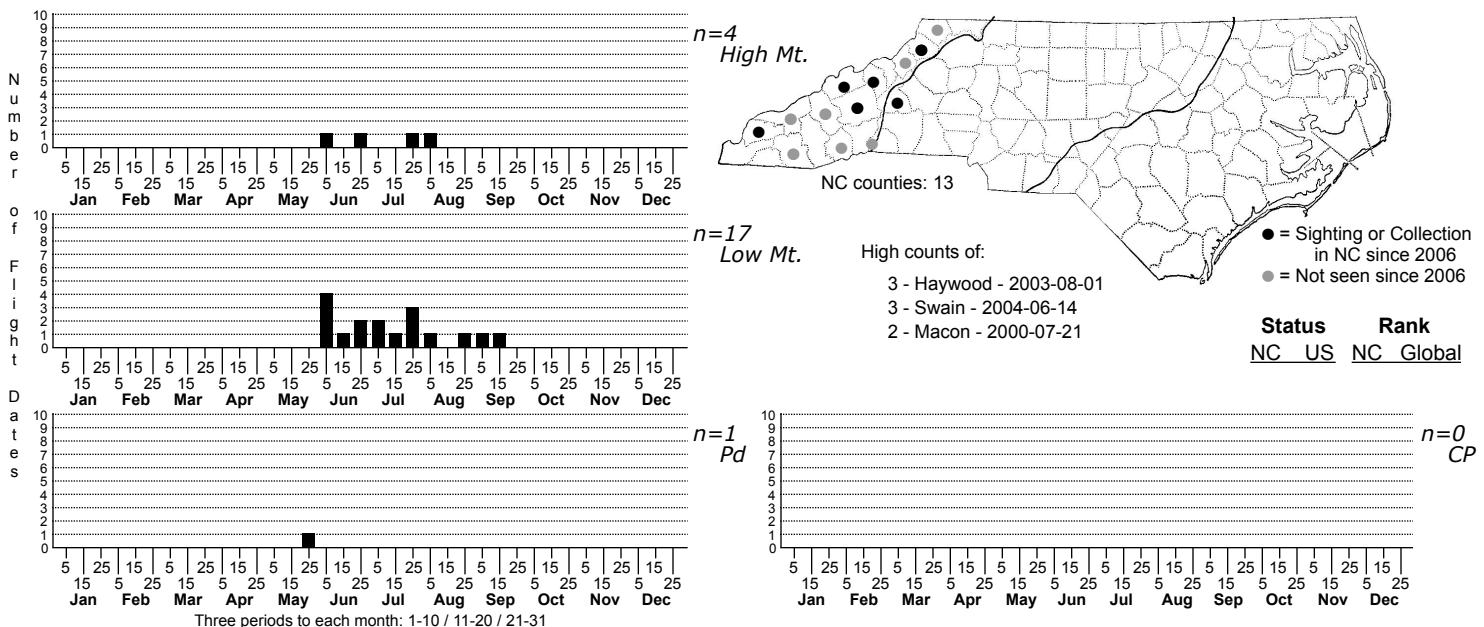


Dasychira plagiata Northern Pine Tussock Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Lymantriinae TRIBE: Orgyini

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: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948) lumps both *plagiata* and *pinicola* under *pini*.

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Ferguson (1978) provides a key to the larvae.

ID COMMENTS: Males are fairly uniformly gray to grayish-brown, with little contrast between the median area and the basal and subterminal areas. As in *manto*, the reniform is bounded by white patches, but the lines are much thinner in *plagiata* than *manto* (Forbes, 1948). Both lines are dentate and the postmedian is sinuous, becoming concave towards the inner margin. Ferguson (1978) mentions that the postmedian is commonly recurved opposite the cell and meets the costa at an acute angle. In some forms, there is a basal dash, but it rarely reaches the antemedian (Forbes, 1948). Females are larger but similarly marked.

DISTRIBUTION: This a northern species that is essentially confined the Mountains in North Carolina. One record exists from Lake James State Park, however, which is located in the Piedmont but close to the base of the Blue Ridge Escarpment.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Appears to have just a single adult flight in North Carolina.

HABITAT: Records in North Carolina come mainly from mesic stands of mixed hardwoods and conifers, including riparian and cove forests at elevations where Hemlock or White Pine are the likely hosts. Records from higher elevations also exist, where Spruce or Fir could be the main host plants used.

FOOD: This species appears to be a generalist on conifer species, feeding on spruce (<i>Picea</i>), fir (<i>Abies</i>), hemlock (<i>Tsuga</i>), Eastern White Pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>), and on at least some species of hard pines (Ferguson, 1978). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

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: GNR SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to occupy a wide range of conifer-containing habitats in the Mountains. Loss of Fir and Hemlock may reduce its populations or range, but its use of Spruce and White Pine means that it is unlikely to be extirpated from the state.