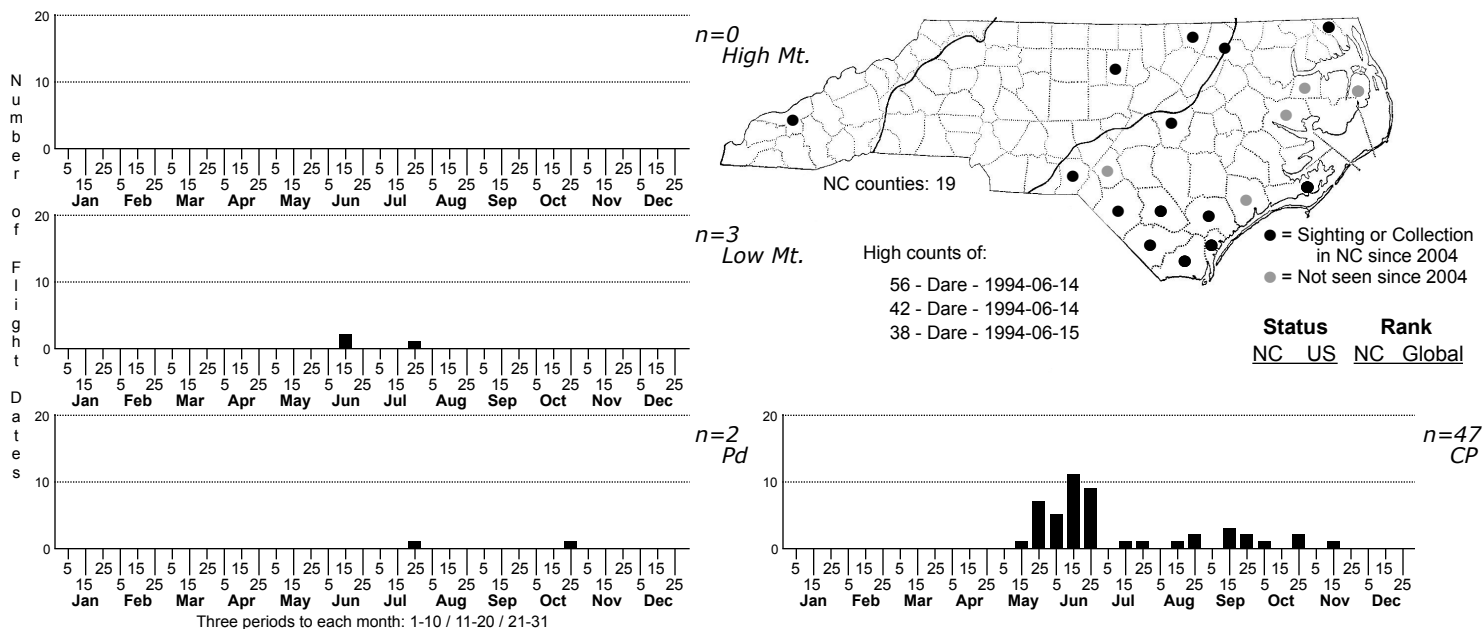


Orgyia detrita Live Oak Tussock Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Lymantriinae TRIBE: Orgyiini

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of ten species in this genus that occur in North America, four of which have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Ferguson (1978)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Ferguson (1978); Wagner (2005)

ID COMMENTS: Males are grayish-brown with a somewhat mottled or striate appearance, especially compared to the fairly smooth appearance of leucostigma but not as contrasting or as dark as definita. The tornal spot is typically missing, which sets it apart from leucostigma and many definita. The postmedian is black, thin, and finely dentate; thinner than in definita and more transverse compared to leucostigma where it is more oblique (Forbes, 1948). Females have only rudimentary wings, similar to the females of Phigalia species.

DISTRIBUTION: Most of our records come from the Coastal Plain, but with few were recorded during the All Taxa Biological Survey conducted in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults fly mainly during the summer but there appears to be a second flight, or at least stragglers, in the fall.

HABITAT: A large number of records come from xeric habitats on Barrier Islands, where it may be associated with Live Oak or Sand Live Oak. Inland, most of our records come from wetter sites. In the Coastal Plain, it occurs in riparian forests where Bald Cypress may be the host, but is particularly abundant in peatland habitats, including Pond Pine Woodlands, High Pocosins, and stands of Peatland Atlantic White Cedar, where neither oaks nor cypress occur. In the Mountains, our records come from sites located near the north shore of Fontana Reservoir and our one Piedmont record also comes from a reservoir shoreline.

FOOD: Probably polyphagous. Ferguson (1978) mentions that Live Oak and Bald Cypress were the only two known host plants, but we have many records from habitats lacking either of those species. Like other members of this genus, detrita is likely to feed on a variety of woody trees and shrubs, including both conifers and hardwoods. In 2016, Bo Sullivan found larvae feeding on Blueberry, a host plant that occurs in many of the sites where adults have been collected.

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: G3G4 S2S3

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

COMMENTS: The full range of habitats used by this species need to be better documented. It appears to be much less common than the other two species but is probably not limited due to host plant or habitat restrictions.