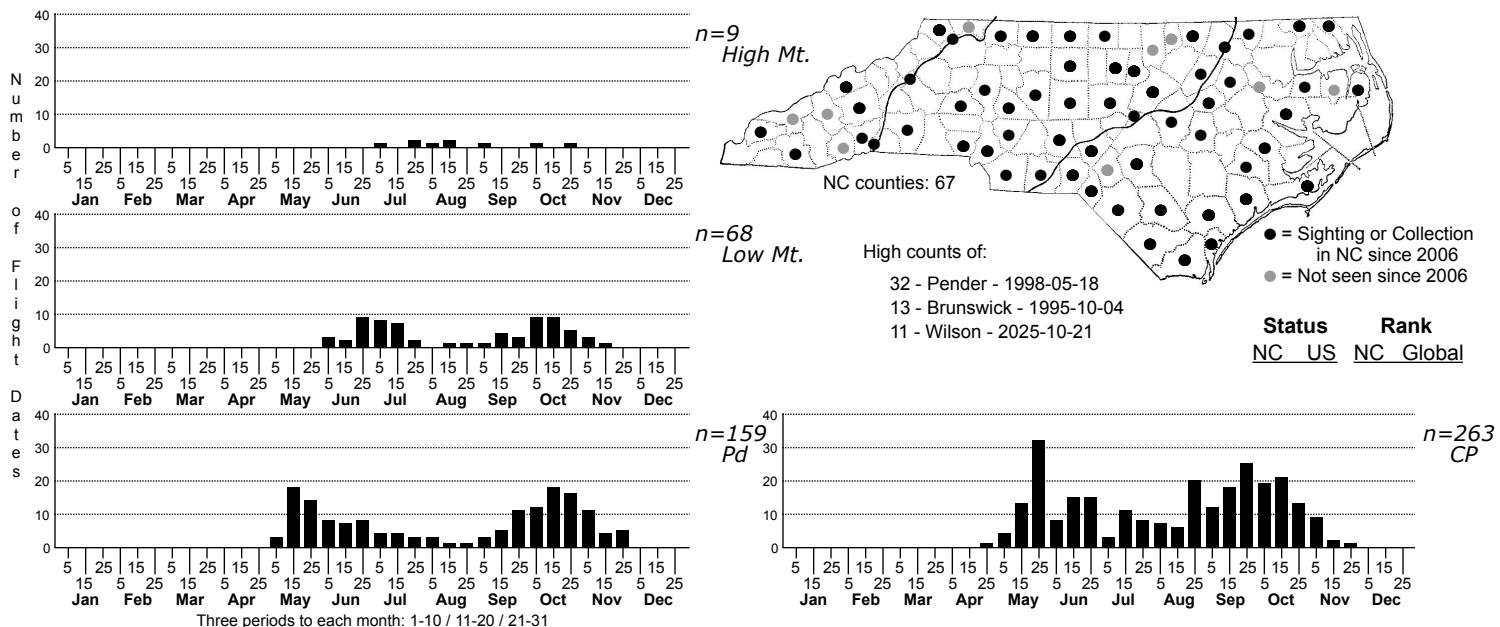


Orgyia leucostigma White-marked Tussock Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Lymantriinae TRIBE: Orgyini

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: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

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

ID COMMENTS: Males are primarily grayish brown with a fairly smooth appearance and lacking strong contrasts between the median area and basal and subterminal areas. The antemedian and postmedian are both fairly narrow and black. The postmedian tends to be more pointed opposite the discal spot than broadly rounded as in definita (Ferguson, 1978), and runs more obliquely to the inner margin rather than transversely as in detrita (Forbes, 1948). The white spot in the tornal area is usually conspicuous, which helps distinguish this species from detrita, where it is usually missing. Leucostigma is distinguished from definita by its grayer coloration, lack of strong contrasts, thinner lines, and lack of prominent dashes or streaks in the subterminal area. Females have only rudimentary wings, similar to the females of Phigalia species; there are no known characters that allow the females of our Orgyia species to be distinguished from one another (Ferguson, 1978).

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs statewide.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Adults appear to be continuously present throughout the growing season within the Coastal Plain but possibly has two flights in the Mountains.

HABITAT: Nearly ubiquitous in natural habitats as well as in residential neighborhoods.

FOOD: Larvae are highly polyphagous, feeding on both conifers and hardwood trees, as well as on herbaceous plants (Ferguson, 1978). In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded feeding on Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Box-elder (*A. negundo*), False Nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*), American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), hickory (*Carya* sp.), hackberry (*Celtis* sp.), American Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Carolina Silverbells (*Halesia carolina*), Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Common Apple (*Malus domestica*), Common Waxmyrtle (*Morella cerifera*), American Hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Overcup Oak (*Q. lyrata*), Water Oak (*Q. nigra*), Willow Oak (*Q. phellos*), Northern Red Oak (*Q. rubra*), rose (*Rosa* sp.), and Coastal Plain Willow (*Salix 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 [S5]

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

COMMENTS: With its nearly ubiquitous occurrence throughout the state and use of nearly all natural and many artificially altered habitats, this species appears to be one of the most secure in the state.