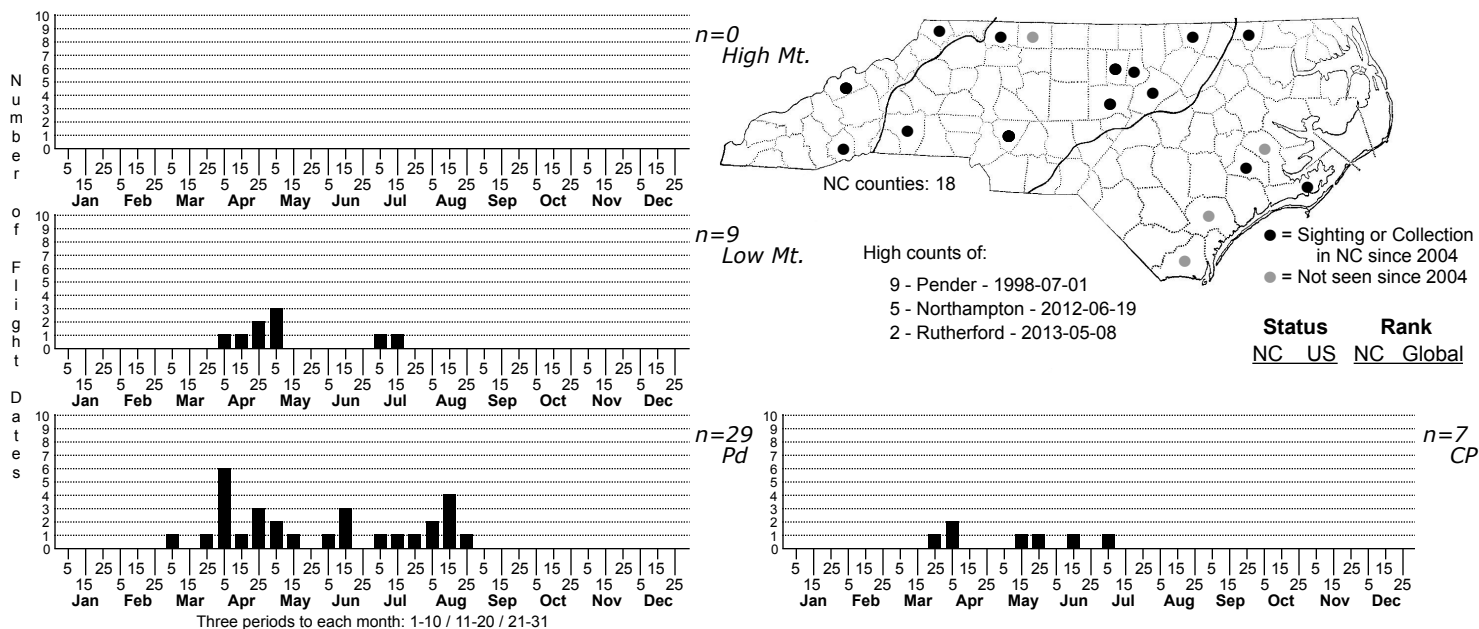


## *Zale phaeocapna* Phaeocapna Zale



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Erebinae TRIBE: Ophiusini

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: One of 39 species in this genus that occur north of Mexico, 23 of which have been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS: MPG, Bugguide

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Rings et al. (1992)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: McCabe (1987); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: Adults are grayish to reddish brown and generally resemble *Z. galbanata* in size and pattern. However, they lack a marginal bar located at the middle of the outer margin, often found in both *galbanata* and *minerea*. They also tend to be more reddish than *galbanata* and have three darkened areas: from the base to the antemedian; between the orbicular and reniform to the costa; and between the postmedian and subterminal at the costa (Rings et al., 1992). The area between the reniform and postmedian is contrastingly pale. While fresh individuals having this combination of characters can probably be identified based on good-quality photographs, dissections of the male reproductive structures provide the most certain way to tell these species apart.

DISTRIBUTION: Although most of our records come from the Coastal Plain, *phaeocapna* is probably restricted there to just the brownwater rivers (Roanoke, Tar, Neuse, and Cape Fear) plus a few other mesic habitats associated with rich soils (e.g., Wet Marl Forests). It is likely to be more widespread in the Piedmont and Mountains than our records currently indicate, but probably still not common.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Too few data exist to determine a pattern in North Carolina.

HABITAT: Our records almost all come from rich, mesic habitats, primarily brownwater river floodplains and Wet Marl Forests in the Coastal Plain.

FOOD: Oligophagous, feeding on a few species of shrubs in a couple of different families. McCabe (1987) reared larvae obtained from eggs laid by a wild-caught female on Hazels, both *Corylus americana* and *C. cornuta*, which were common in the area where the female was collected (other common plants were offered but refused). He was also able to switch later instar larvae from Hazel to Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), which was also present, although uncommon, at the same site. Larvae have additionally been found in the wild feeding on Hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*) (K. Koch, cited by McCabe, 1987).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: Appears to come moderately well to blacklights, with up to seven having been collected in a single trap. Probably also comes well to bait, as is true for Zales in general.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: Uncommon and fairly specialized in terms of habitats, apparently less common than its host plants would indicate.