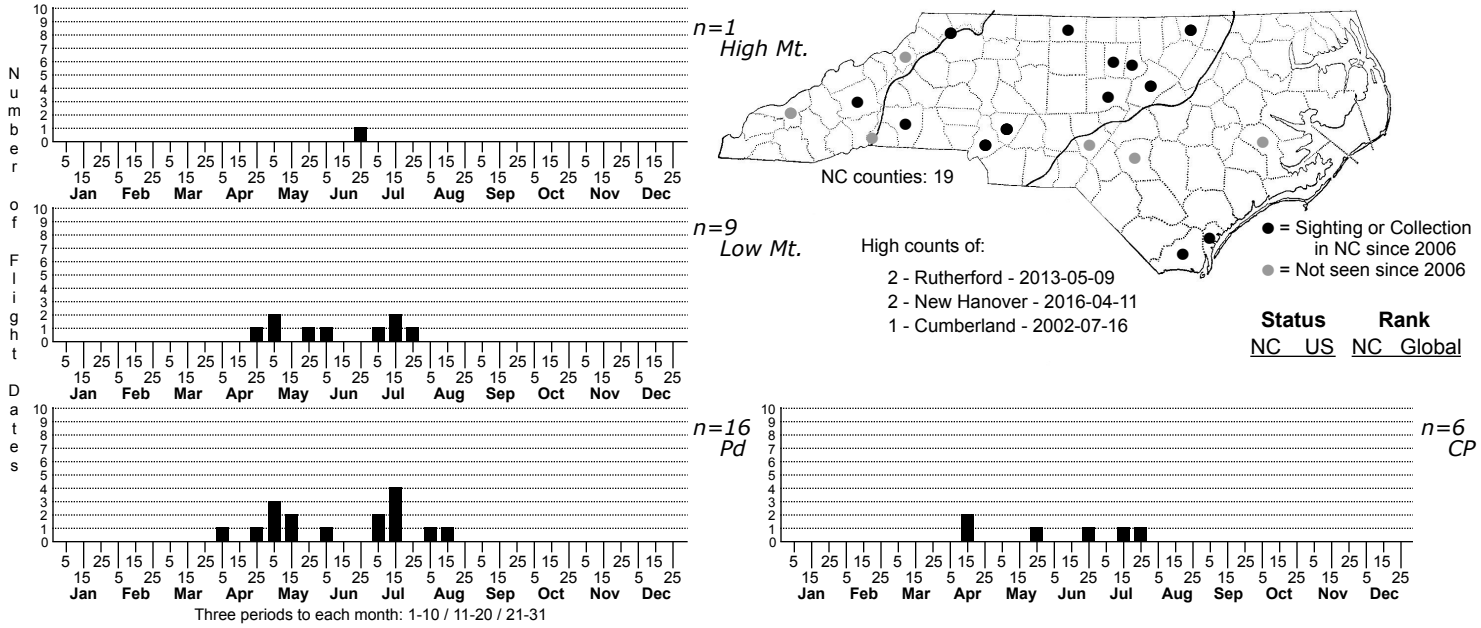
Zale confusa Confused Zale



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: (Not in either field guide)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: McDunnough (1943); Forbes (1954); Rings et al. (1992)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: Confusa is a light brown member of this group, closely resembling both metatoides and particularly metata. According to McDunnough (1953), confusa is the most poorly maculate of these species, but our specimens are only slightly larger, paler, and less reddish than metata and otherwise so close that we recommend dissection to confirm their identities.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs over most of the state except the Lower Coastal Plain, where Shortleaf Pine is scarce.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably has two broods

HABITAT: Except for a Craven County record, all of our records come from fairly dry upland habitats in the Piedmont and Mountains. Shortleaf Pine is uncommon in the Coastal Plain and the habitat where this species was recorded in Craven County is uncertain (Pinus echinata has not been recorded from Craven County -- UNC Herbarium Atlas, 2014)

FOOD: Larvae are essentially monophagous, feeding mainly on Shortleaf Pine (Pinus echinata) and perhaps occasionally other hard pines (Wagner et al., 2011).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: May come poorly to lights, which could explain the scarcity of records for what should be a fairly common species. Probably comes well to bait, like other members of this genus.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S5]

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

COMMENTS: Although seemingly an uncommon species in North Carolina, too little is known about the distribution and habitat affinities of metata to estimate its conservation needs.