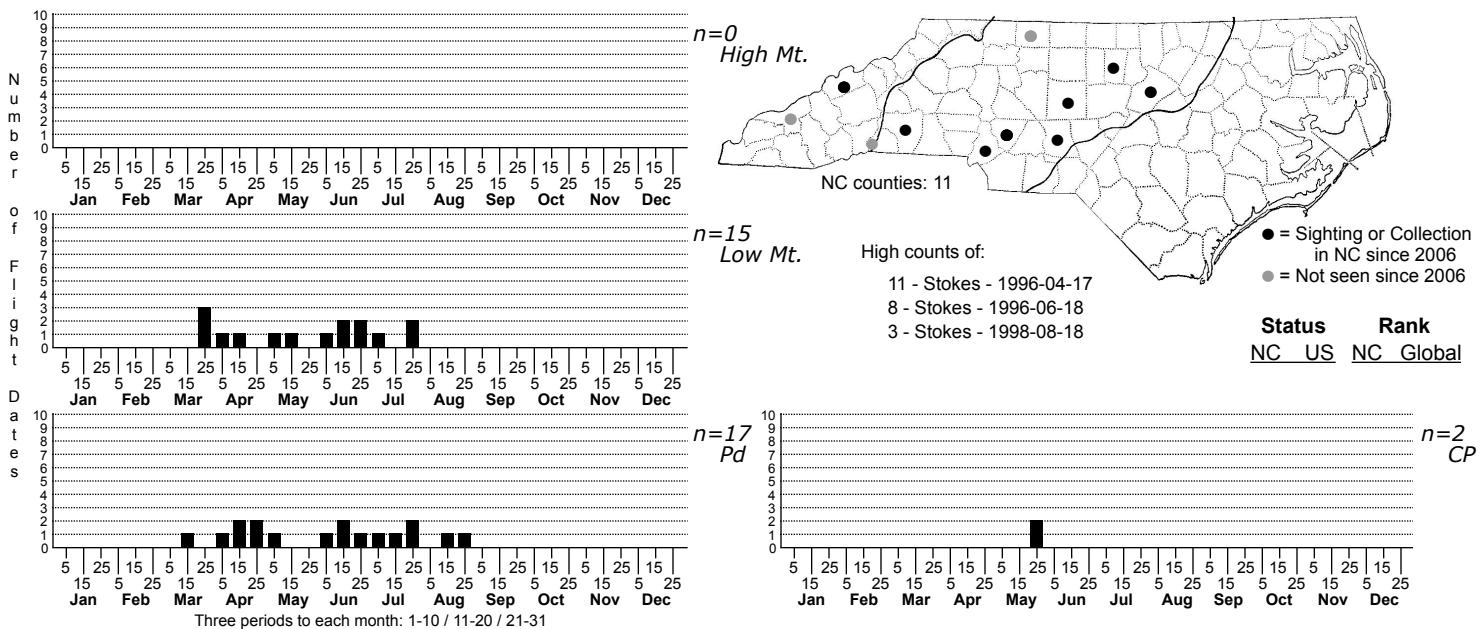


*Zale metata* None



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)

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

ID COMMENTS: Metata is a light brown member of the pine-feeding group, closely resembling both *Z. metatoides* and *confusa* (Forbes, 1954). According to Smith (repeated by McDunnough, 1943 and Forbes, 1954) *metata* is much paler than *metatoides* and somewhat grayer in the antemedian area and redder just beyond the reniform; the lines are also more obscure. In our specimens, *metata* appears to be duller than *metatoides* with less contrast between zones; the postmedian, however, appears to be well defined in several specimens. Our specimens of *metata* appear to be most similar to *confusa*, but are slightly smaller, darker, and more reddish -- we strongly recommend dissecting specimens of these species in order to confirm their identities.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably follows the distribution of Scrub Pine in North Carolina, which is absent over the Coastal Plain but widespread in the Piedmont and Mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably has at least two broods (Wagner et al., 2011), largely overlapping with *Z. bethunei*, which also feeds on Scrub Pine

HABITAT: Scrub Pine typically grows on dry upland sites, including old fields (Weakley, 2012); it is also common on badly eroded sites or other areas with severe soil disturbance. Our records come primarily from dry, upland slopes in the Piedmont and Mountains.

FOOD: Larvae are essentially monophagous, feeding only on Virginia Pine (<i>Pinus virginiana</i>) in our area (Forbes, 1954; 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 [S3S4]

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.