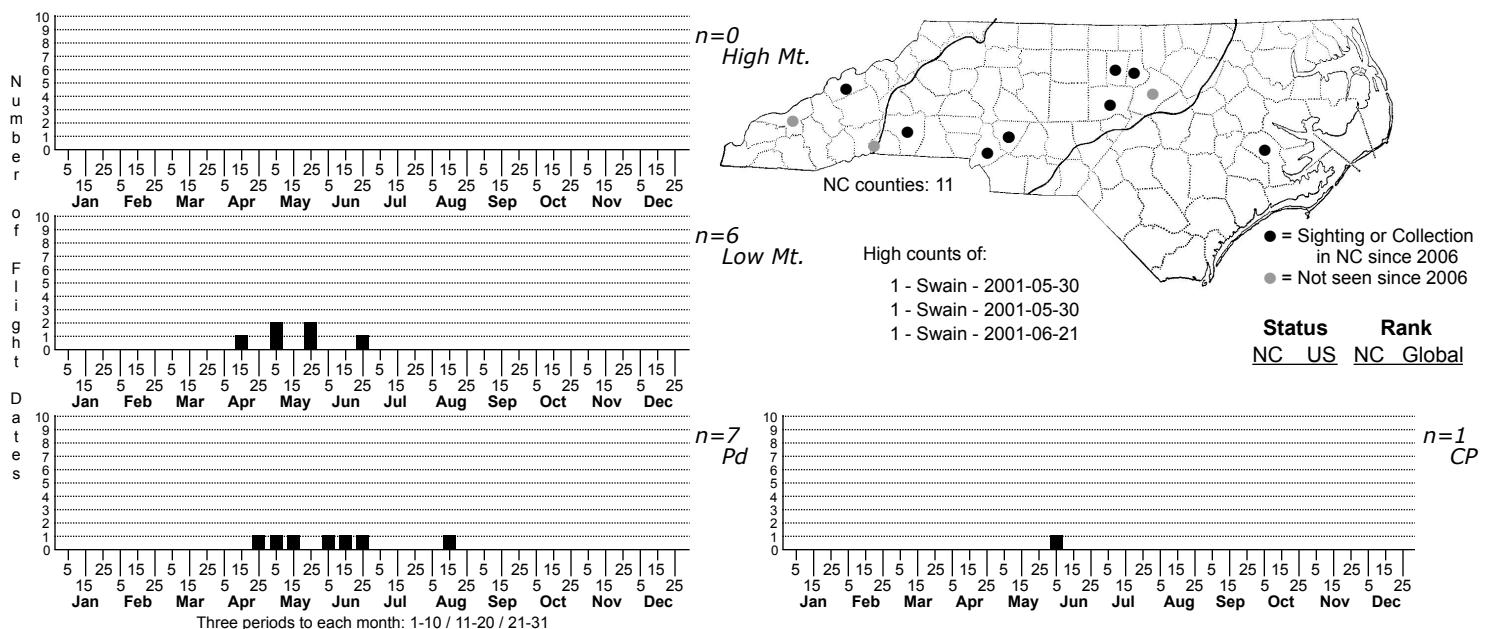


Zale curema Black-eyed Zale



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 (2005); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: Curema is a small species, similar in size and pattern to metatoides, metata, and confusa but is a darker, smoky purplish brown. The reniform is typically prominent and dark brown to black and like other members of this group, it has a patch of contrasting yellow or orange following the reniform (McDunnough, 1943).

DISTRIBUTION: Possibly will turn up in most areas of the state, but currently not enough is known about its host plants and habitats to be sure

FLIGHT COMMENT: Probably has just a single flight in late spring

HABITAT: Our records come from both floodplain and dry ridge habitats.

FOOD: Larvae are probably stenophagous, feeding only on hard pines like most of the pine-feeding *Zale* group. Wagner et al. (2011) specifically mention Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*), which may be used in the Mountains. That species does not occur, however, in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain where we also have records for *Z. curema*. In those areas, Pond Pine (*P. serotina*) or Loblolly Pine (*P. taeda*) are possibilities.

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 [S2S4]

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