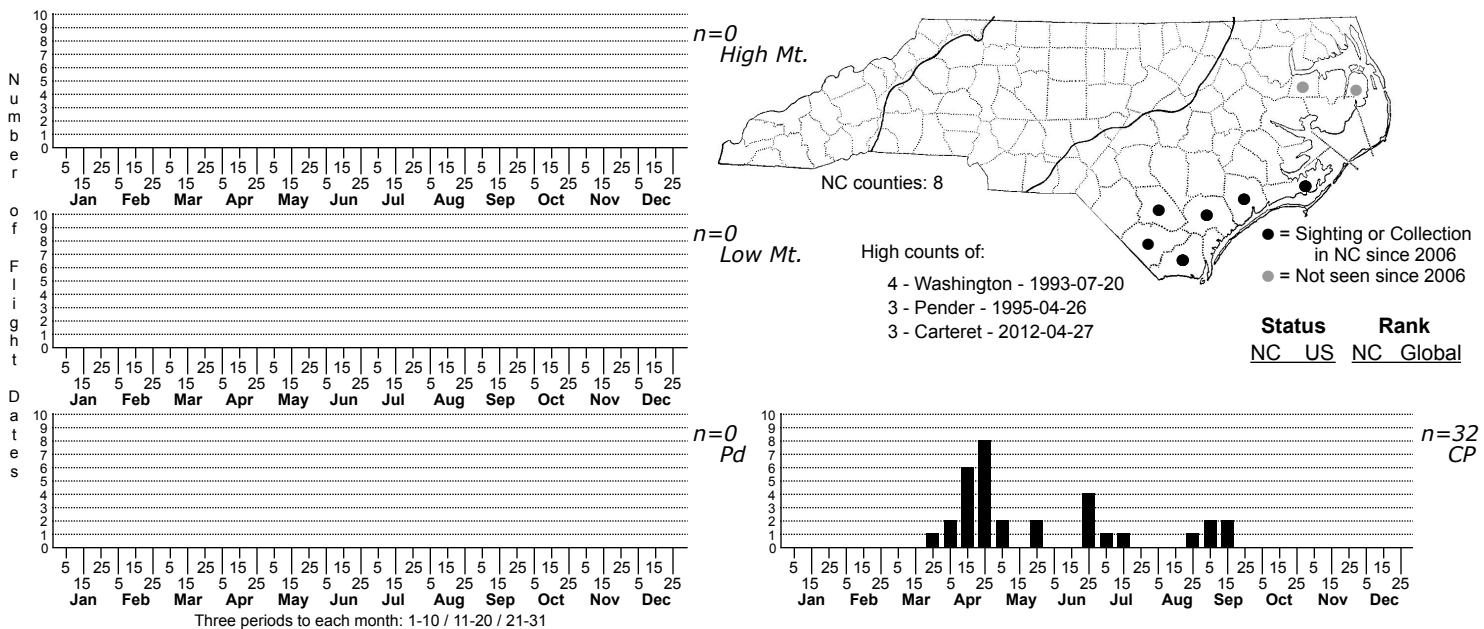


Gondysia similis Gordonia Darkwing



FAMILY: Erebidae **SUBFAMILY:** Erebinae **TRIBE:** Poaphilini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of four species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010), all of which have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hampson (1913); Sullivan (2010)

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

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized dark brown Erebidae. The ground color of the head, body, and both sets of wings is deep reddish brown (Hampson, 1913). The most conspicuous line is usually the medial, which is often shaded with dark brown on the outer side. The antemedian and postmedian vary in prominence and are sometimes obsolete. The orbicular and reniform are also typically absent, but a dark, double-triangular spot is characteristically located just below the apex of the forewing, at the upper end of the subterminal line. The terminal area is usually paler than the subterminal, often matching the shading of the basal half of the wing.

DISTRIBUTION: Restricted to the Outer Coastal Plain, occurring from the Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula southward

FLIGHT COMMENT: Multiple brooded, occurring from late April to September

HABITAT: All of our records come from peatlands or from wet savannas located next to peatlands. Peatland habitats include peat-dome pocosins, peat-filled Carolina Bays, Bay Forests, and Pond Pine Woodlands.

FOOD: Larvae are probably monophagous on Loblolly Bay (*< i> Gordonia lasianthus < /i>*) (Wagner et al., 2011). A larva found on Gordonia by Richard Broadwell was reared to adulthood by J.B. Sullivan (Sullivan, 2010) and Sullivan has subsequently found two more larvae on that plant (Wagner et al., 2011). All North Carolina records come from sites where that plant is present.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Appears to come well to 15 watt blacklights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G3G4 S2S3

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

COMMENTS: This species is highly specialized, feeding on a single species of plant that is itself a peatland specialist. This habitat type has undergone severe reductions in the past due both to peat mining and conversion to agricultural and silvicultural lands. Several large examples are now protected in North Carolina, however, and neither peatland habitats, Gordonia, or the moth currently appear to be in danger of extirpation. On the other hand, that status may change as sea-level rise and accompanying salt-water intrusion begin to eliminate some of the largest peat dome pocosins occurring in the state, with those located on the Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula probably in greatest jeopardy. Such large losses, or the re-commencement of large scale peatland conversion, could easily change the situation, moving the moth into the Significantly Rare category.