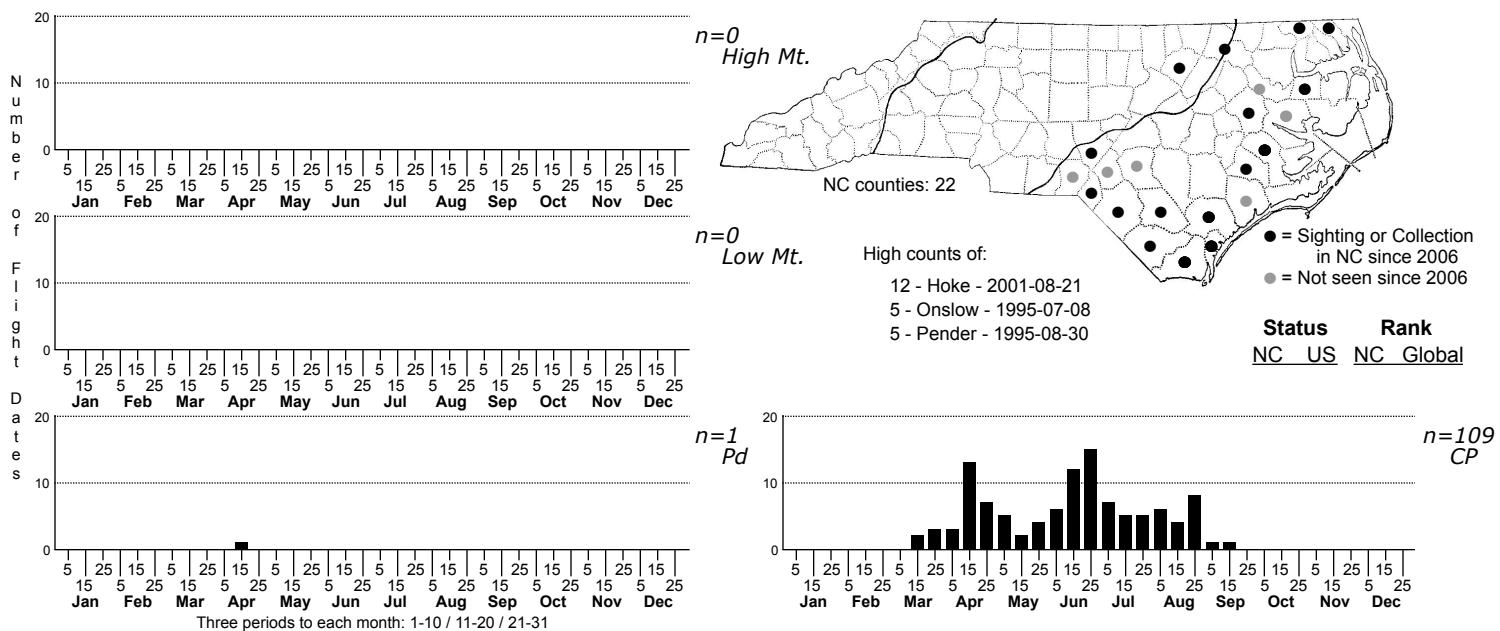


Cutina albopunctella Cypress Looper Moth



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 are restricted to the southeastern United States and have been recorded in North Carolina (Pogue and Ferguson, 1998).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Leckie and Beadle (2018; shows a Florida specimen, not the form typically found in NC)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Pogue and Ferguson (1998)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Pogue and Ferguson (1998); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-small, relatively unmarked, grayish-brown Erebidae. The ground color of the forewings is light brown, dusted with gray; in northern populations, such as ours, the wings are fairly uniformly colored, rather than streaked as in the Florida populations. The antemedian and postmedian are thin and black, irregular, and often obscure; the subterminal is usually a diffuse white. A pale reniform spot or crescent may be present. Hindwings are buff (Pogue and Ferguson, 1998). *Cutina arcuata* and *aluticolor* are somewhat similar but are usually darker and have more conspicuous and contrasting transverse lines.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs throughout the range of Taxodium in North Carolina, including the Outer Coastal Plain, Fall-line Sandhills, and a few sites in the eastern Piedmont where cypress swamps occur.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Flies through most the growing season, from March to September. Our data indicate there may be three peaks in activity

HABITAT: We have records from the middle of deeply flooded swamps as well as seasonally dry pond cypress savannas.

FOOD: Larvae are stenophagous, probably feeding on both species of cypress (<i>Taxodium</i>). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Appears to come well to blacklights; we have no records from bait. Larvae can be found by beating the foliage of their host plants (Wagner et al., 2011).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: This species is a strong host plant and habitat specialist, but on species and habitats that are still widespread in at least the outer third of the state. Several threats exist, however, including sea-level rise and salt-water intrusion along the Coast; draining and conversion of Carolina Bays and other cypress-savannas to agriculture and silviculture; and loss of deep swamp habitats due to timber harvest and creation of impoundments. Despite these threats, and past losses of habitat due to massive timber cutting in bottomland forests, this species currently appears to be relatively secure within the state.