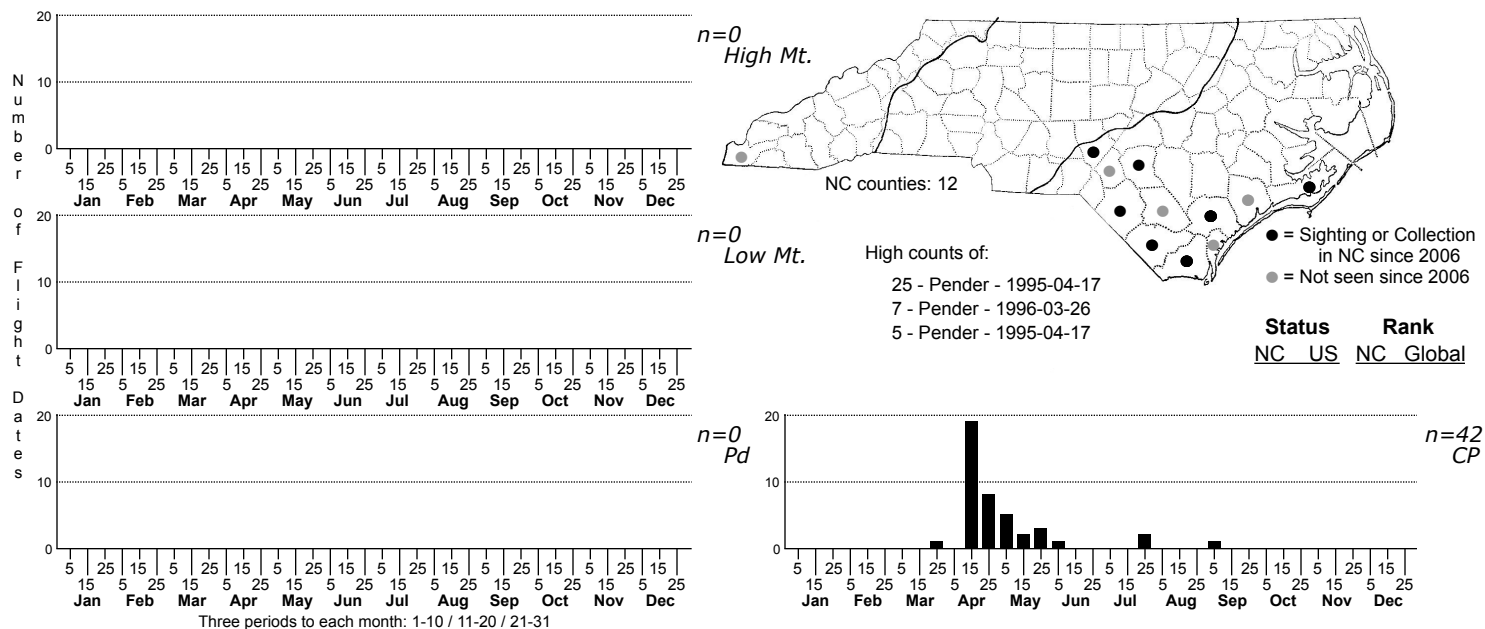


Argyrostromis quadrifilaris Four-lined Chocolate Moth



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Erebinae TRIBE: Poaphilini

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of six species in this genus, all of which occur in central and eastern North America, including North Carolina (Sullivan and Lafontaine, 2011).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Sullivan and Lafontaine (2011)

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

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized, dark brown Erebid with the forewings crossed by straight, pale antemedian and postmedian lines; the fringe may also be pale but there are no other markings. In typical specimens, these lines are contrastingly white, but in Florida specimens (= *Poaphila obsoleta*), they may be yellowish-brown and only slightly paler than the ground color (see illustrations in Sullivan and Lafontaine, 2011). Sexes are similar. *Argyrostromis anilis* has a similar color and pattern, but has an incomplete postmedian line, reaching only part way across the wing.

DISTRIBUTION: All of our current records come from the southern Outer Coastal Plain and Fall-line Sandhills, although there is one historic record (reported by Brimley, 1938) from Cherokee County.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Flies primarily from late March through May, with at least some stragglers appearing later in the summer.

HABITAT: All records in North Carolina, except for Brimley's record from the Mountains, come from Longleaf Pine habitats. Most are from wet-mesic savanna and flatwoods habitats, which either support populations of their host plants or where the host plants occur in ecotones adjoining pocosins and other peatlands. Records are lacking, however, from pure peatland habitats or from blackwater swamp forests, both of which support populations of *Lyonia* species and *Eubotrys* (= *Leucothoe*). *Lyonia ligustrina* also occur in montane habitats, but we only have one historic record from the Mountains, which needs to be confirmed.

FOOD: Apparently not recorded in the wild, but in captivity, larvae feed on Maleberry (*Lyonia ligustrina*) and to a lesser extent on Staggerbush (*L. mariana*) and Swamp Doghobble (*Eubotrys racemosa*) (Wagner et al., 2011). Earlier reports that it feeds on cotton appear to be in error.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Appears to come fairly well to blacklights but like other members of this genus can be seen flying during the day. We have no records from bait although other members of this genus come at least occasionally to it.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 SNR [S2S3]

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation, however, does not confer any legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: This species appears to be a fairly uncommon specialist of Longleaf Pine flatwoods and savannas or peatland ecotones. Like *Datana ranaecephala*, it may be a fire-follower, making use of the fresh foliage of *Lyonia* and other heaths that sprout following a fire. Even if not, it is probably dependent on a metapopulation strategy to cope with its frequently burned habitats and is probably at risk due to the extreme reduction and fragmentation of its habitats that have taken place over the past several centuries.