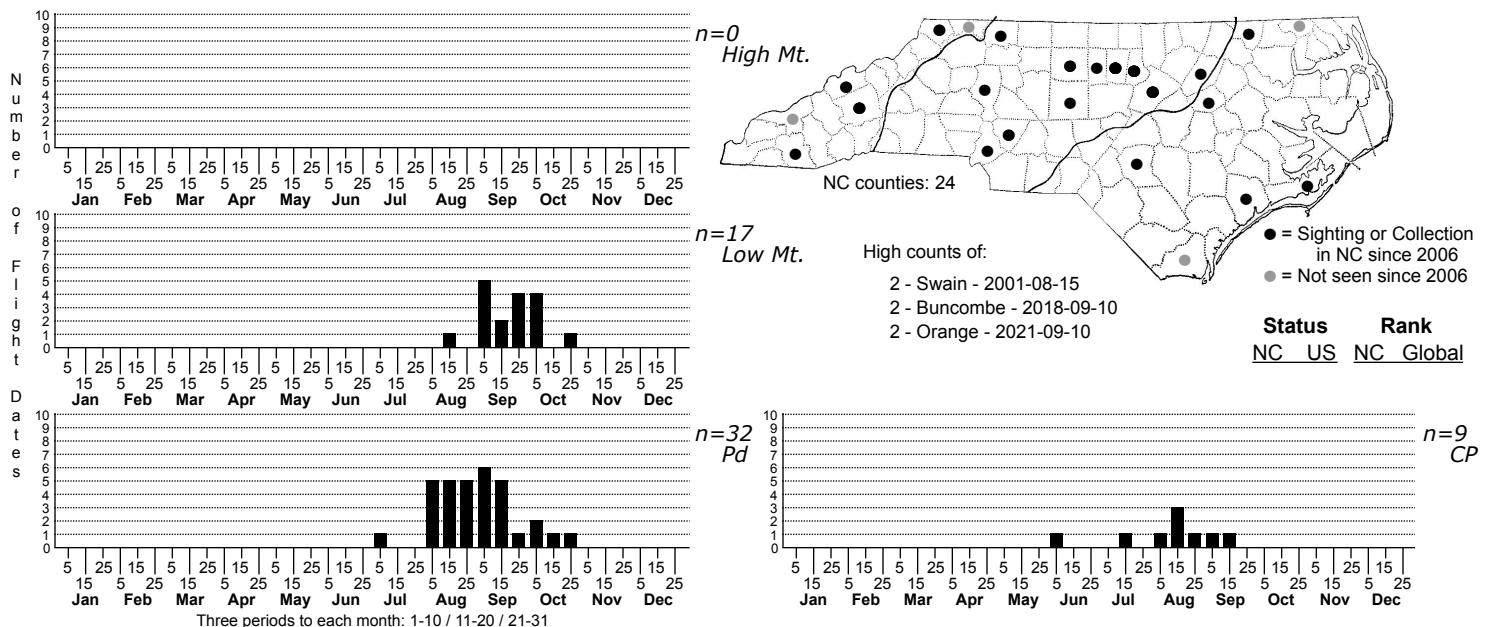


# *Catocala piatrix* Penitent Underwing



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Erebinae TRIBE: Catocalini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of 103 species in this genus that occur in North America (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010, 2015), 67 of which have been recorded in North Carolina. *Catocala piatrix* was included by Barnes and McDunnough (1918) in their Group II (also adopted by Forbes, 1954), which contains just this one species.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Sargent (1976)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1954); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: A large brownish-gray Underwing with boldly banded orange and black hindwings. The forewings are mottled with dark and pale gray. A contrasting pale band extends from the costa to the subreniform, separating two patches of dark gray located in the upper basal area and the area surrounding the reniform. The subterminal area is a medium gray but is crossed by a dark gray apical dash. The hindwings are broadly banded with orange and black. *Catocala innubens* has similar hindwings but has a very different forewing color and/or pattern.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably occurs throughout the Piedmont and Mountains but may be less widespread in the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, flying in North Carolina from late July to early October.

HABITAT: The majority of our records come from wet to mesic hardwood forests; only a couple of records come from dry slopes but in areas adjoining wet or mesic stands. Most records come from areas of fairly rich soils but at least one record from Gates County came from a blackwater floodplain.

FOOD: Larvae are stenophagous, feeding mainly on Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), Pecan (*Carya illinoinensis*), Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*), and other hickories (Forbes, 1954; Wagner et al., 2011). In North Carolina, Jeff Niznik has reared a larva on Pecan.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes to light to some extent and also to bait.

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: We currently have only a few records for this species but it may be undersampled, requiring more bait surveys in particular to determine its actual frequency and abundance. This species is a moderate habitat specialist, but its habitats themselves are still fairly common. While it appears to be secure within the state more information is needed to accurately assess its status.