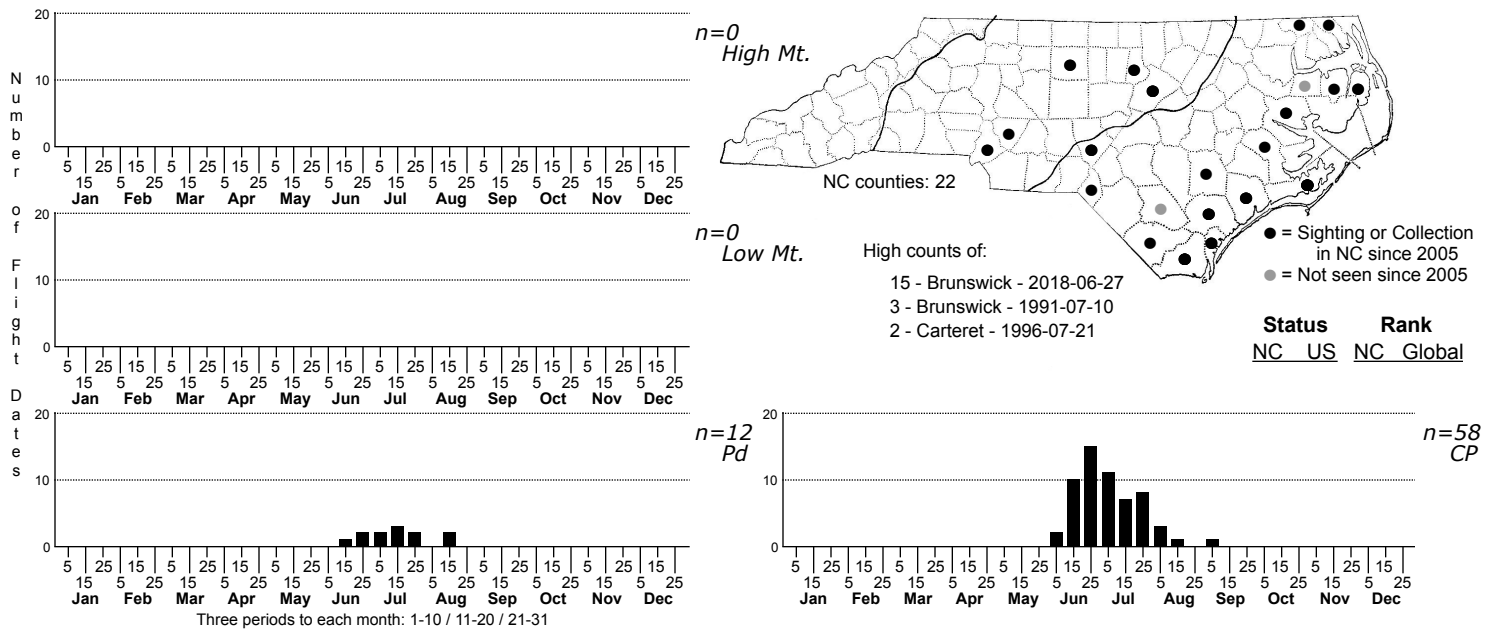


## *Catocala muliercula* Little Wife Underwing



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. Included by Barnes and McDunnough (1918) in their Group IV (also adopted by Forbes, 1954). Members of this group feed on species of the Myricaceae; in addition to muliercula, this group includes Catocala antinympha and badia, both found north of our region.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1954)

ID COMMENTS: A large, dark brown Underwing with broad yellow-orange and dark brown bands on the hindwings. The ground color of the forewings is rich, reddish brown with a maroon sheen, darker in the basal third before the antemedian line, shaded with gray in the median area, and somewhat yellowish brown bordering the postmedian line. The antemedian line has two waves, the upper reaching nearly to the subreniform, and the lower located just below the anal vein; the postmedian has the typical toothed pattern, with the subreniform created by a deep, often open loop. A dark, irregular subapical dash crosses the subterminal area. The hindwings have a particularly broad dark band along the outer margin; the two orange bands are narrower and yellowish rather than reddish. Some forms of Catocala innubens are similarly red-brown on the forewings but the pale bands on the hindwings are reeder-orange than in muliercula.

DISTRIBUTION: The range of this species closely matches the distribution of Waxmyrtle within the state: extensive in the Coastal Plain but occurring well into the Piedmont

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, with adults flying from June to early August

HABITAT: Our records come from a wide variety of Coastal Plain habitats, including maritime forest and scrub on the barrier islands, peatlands, savannas, and bottomland forests in the inner portion of the Coastal Plain. All of these habitats are wet to mesic and support populations of Common Waxmyrtle as well as other members of this genus. Natural habitats used in the Piedmont need further study, but at least one individual was found in a residential neighborhood where the only Waxmyrtles were planted as ornamentals (S. Hall, pers. obs., Orange County).

FOOD: Larvae feed on Common Waxmyrtle (*Morella cerifera*) and have also been reported from Northern Bayberry (*M. pensylvanica*) (Wagner, 2005). In North Carolina, J.B. Sullivan reared larvae from Waxmyrtle.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: Comes to lights to some extent and can be common at bait; sometimes flushed during the day

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 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 occurs extensively across the eastern half of the state, feeds on a common host plant, and occupies a wide range of habitats: it appears to be secure within the state.