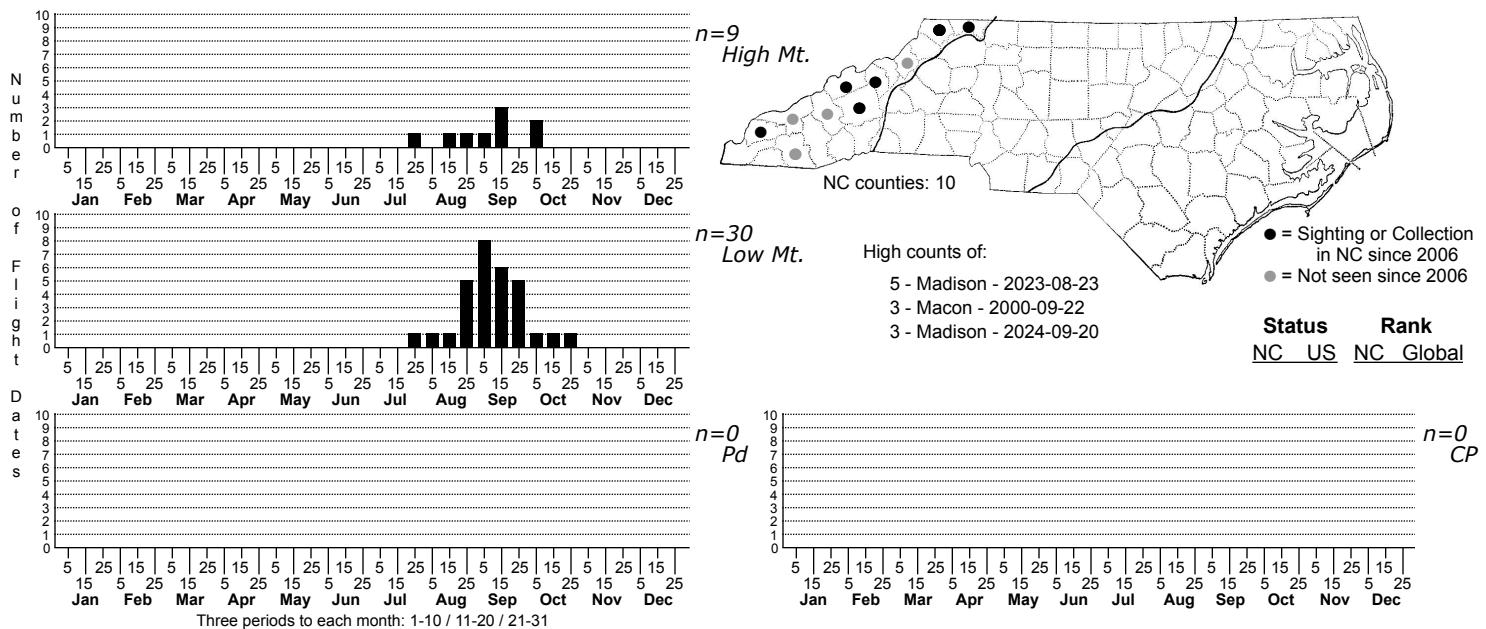


## *Catocala habilis* Habilis Underwing



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 V (also adopted by Forbes, 1954). This group comprises 10 species, all of which feed on Hickories or Walnuts (Juglandaceae). In addition to *habilis*, other members of this group that occur in North Carolina include *serena*, *robinsonii*, *judith*, *flebilis*, *angusi*, *obscura*, *residua*, and *sappho*.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1954)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-large, pale gray Underwing with black and orange-banded hindwings. The head, thorax, and the ground color of the forewings is pale gray; the wings are dusted with somewhat darker gray or with light brown beyond the postmedian. The antemedian and postmedian lines are narrow and black; the subterminal is whitish. A black basal dash is present in the females but usually absent in the males; the lower portion of the postmedian line is darker than the rest of the line, including a horizontal portion forming an anal dash. The hindwings have broad black and orange bands. Pale forms of *Catocala robinsonii* and *myrtistica* have similar forewing color and pattern but have black hindwings. *Catocala serena* has orange and black hindwings and pale forewings but has a more uniform, duller gray ground color; the subreniform in *serena* is usually more open than in *habilis* and the basal and anal dashes are not developed; the lines are generally less dentate in *habilis* and the collar is contrastingly brown (Sargent, 1976).

DISTRIBUTION: Restricted to the Mountains in North Carolina

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine with adults appearing in August and persisting into October

HABITAT: Our records come primarily from rich, mesic stands of hardwoods, including montane riparian forests, cove forests, and northern hardwoods. Occurs at elevations both above and below 4,000'.

FOOD: Larvae are stenophagous, feeding primarily on hickories and particularly on Shagbark Hickory (<i>Carya ovata</i>) (Wagner et al., 2011). Sargent (1976) also mentions walnut (<i>Juglans</i>) as a host plant. We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Appears to come well to lights. As with other <i>Catocala</i>, probably also comes well to bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S4?]

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

COMMENTS: This species has a moderately restricted range in North Carolina, where it occupies a somewhat specialized but still widespread type of habitat. Currently, it appears to be secure within the state.