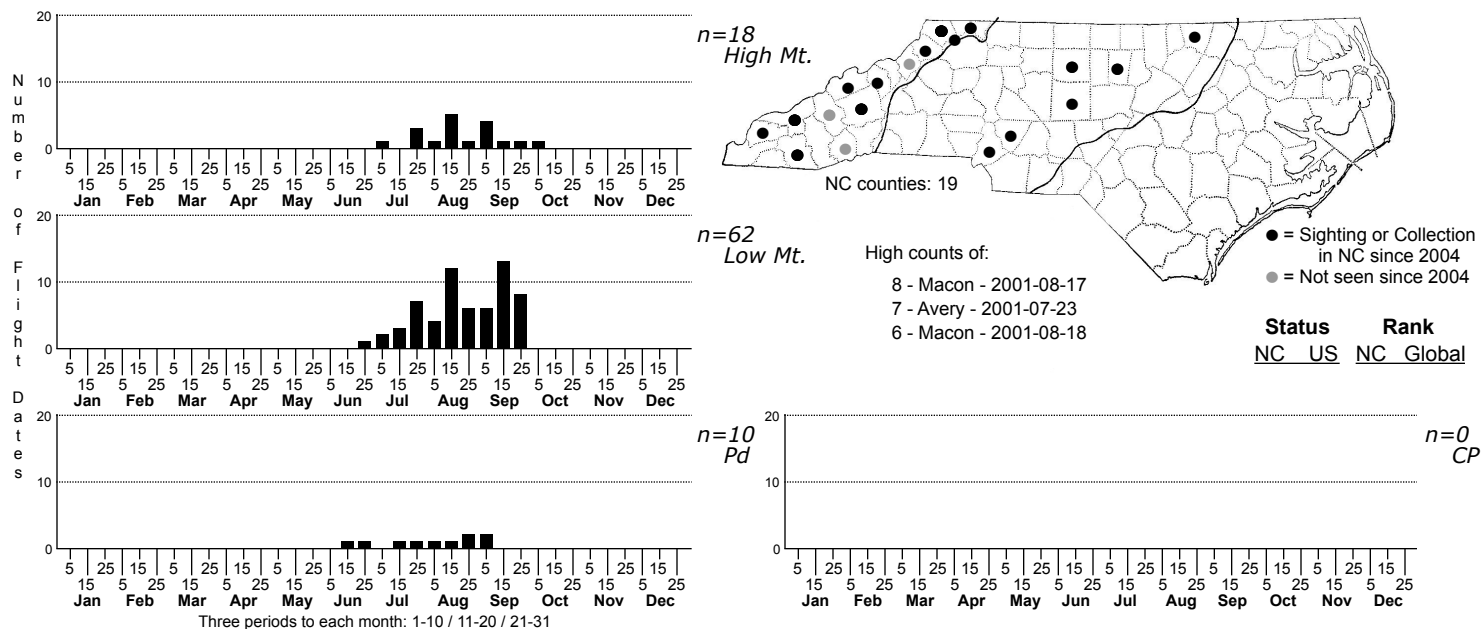


Catocala retecta Yellow-gray Underwing



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 VI (also adopted by Forbes, 1954). This group comprises 15 species, all of which feed on Hickories or Walnuts (Juglandaceae). In addition to *retecta*, other members of this group that occur in North Carolina include *dejecta*, *ulalume*, *insolabilis*, *myristica*, *vidua*, *maestosa*, *lachrymosa*, *palaeogama*, *nebulosa*, *subnata*, and *neogama*.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS: MPG, BugGuide, BAMONA, BOLD

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

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

ID COMMENTS: A large pale gray and black-streaked Underwing with black hindwings. The ground color of the forewings is typically pale gray to cream. The transverse lines dashes are black and contrasting; the antemedian is double with a white filling. A basal dash is present in both sexes, with a slightly separate dash crossing the antemedian and nearly joining the postmedian at the subreniform loop. The long teeth of the postmedian just beyond the cell are strongly marked with black, as is the horizontally retracted portion of postmedian just above the inner margin. The veins in the marginal area are also black, with dark marginal patches at M1, M2, and A1. The subterminal line is white, preceded by a reddish brown shade. The reniform spot is also shaded with reddish brown. The hindwings are black with a white fringe. The horizontal dashes are narrower and more broken than in the streaked forms of *robinsonii*, *myristica*, and *angusi*. *Catocala flebilis* is smaller and darker blue-gray on the forewings. The postmedian on the underside of the hindwings has a distinctive outer bulge missing in the other species (Sargent, 1976).

DISTRIBUTION: Probably found throughout the Piedmont and Mountains

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, flying from June to September in North Carolina

HABITAT: Most of our records come from rich, mesic stands of hardwoods, including rich cove forest, northern hardwoods, mountain and brownwater alluvial forests. Records also come from drier ridge tops, including one stand of dry basic hardwoods in the Piedmont and more acidic stands in the mountains.

FOOD: Stenophagous, feeding on Shagbarks and other section *Carya* hickories (Wagner et al., 2011)

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Comes well to lights; like most Underwings, it probably comes to bait

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: This species appears to be widespread and regularly occurring in the Mountains, where it appears to be secure. It seems to be much less frequent in the rest of the state but appears to occupy a wide range of forest type in that area as well.