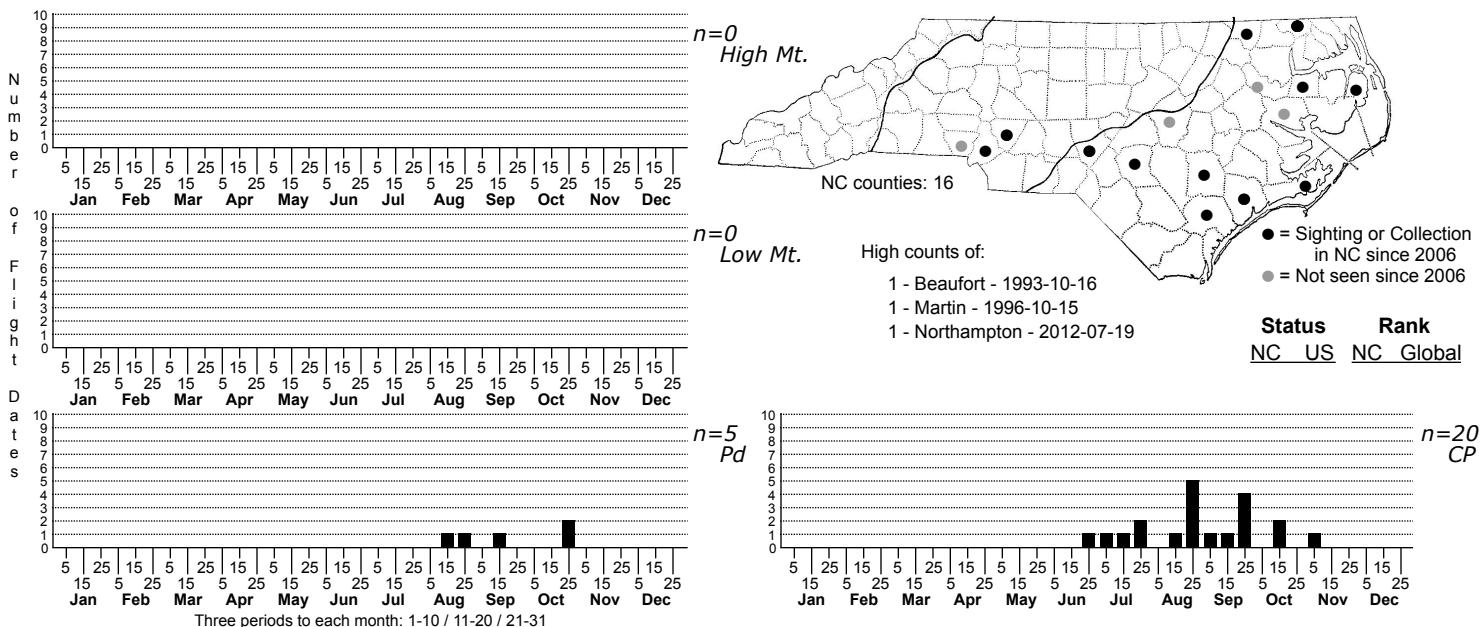


# *Catocala carissima* Carissima Underwing



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Erebinae TRIBE: Catocalini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of 103 species in this genus that occur in North America (Gall and Hawks, 2010; Kons and Borth, 2015a,b), 67 of which have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954, as *C. cara sylvia*); Sargent (1976)

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

ID COMMENTS: A large underwing moth. Fore-wings are a dark, maroon-brown, mottled by a strong dusting of green, gold, or yellowish-gray scales; a characteristic patch of the light scales is located at the apex, reaching the outer margin. Hind-wings are banded with black and bright red to rose; the inner margin and base of the hindwing are marked with black. *Catocala cara* is very similar but is less mottled and lacks a well set-off apical patch of light scales. In worn specimens, the dentations of the postmedian -- particularly the two distal points and the point just above and outward from the sub-reniform patch -- are shorter and broader in *C. carissima* than in *cara* (SPH, pers. obs.). *Catocala amatrix* is similar in size and hindwing color and frequently flies with *C. carissima* in the same habitats. Typical *C. amatrix* have strong oblique dark dashes that are missing in *C. carissima*. Form *selecta* of *C. amatrix* has a more yellow-brown ground color on the forewings than *C. carissima*, possesses a grayish sheen rather than a gold dusting, and has an inward-pointing tooth on the antemedian near the radial vein -- in both *C. cara* and *C. carissima* a prominent outward-pointing tooth is present in this area. The base of the hindwing of *C. amatrix* is usually not marked with black although there may be a small spot of black at the inner margin.

DISTRIBUTION: Appears to be more of a Coastal Plain species than *C. cara*, although there is at least one historic record from as far west as Gaston County (Brimley, 1938). The range of this species appears to be completely overlapped by *C. cara* in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, with adults flying from late June to October. *C. carissima* appears to start flying earlier than *C. cara*, which usually begins to show up in late July.

HABITAT: All of our records come from lake, pond, swamp, and river shorelines, where willows are common.

FOOD: Larvae are apparently stenophagous, feeding on willows (*Salix* spp.) (Wagner, et al., 2011). Reports from *Populus* need verification. We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes to blacklights to some extent but like other underwings comes particularly well to bait (Wagner et al., 2011).

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 does not appear to be common but adults may be undersampled by light trapping. It is otherwise widespread in North Carolina and is associated with common host plants and habitats. It currently appears to be secure within the state.