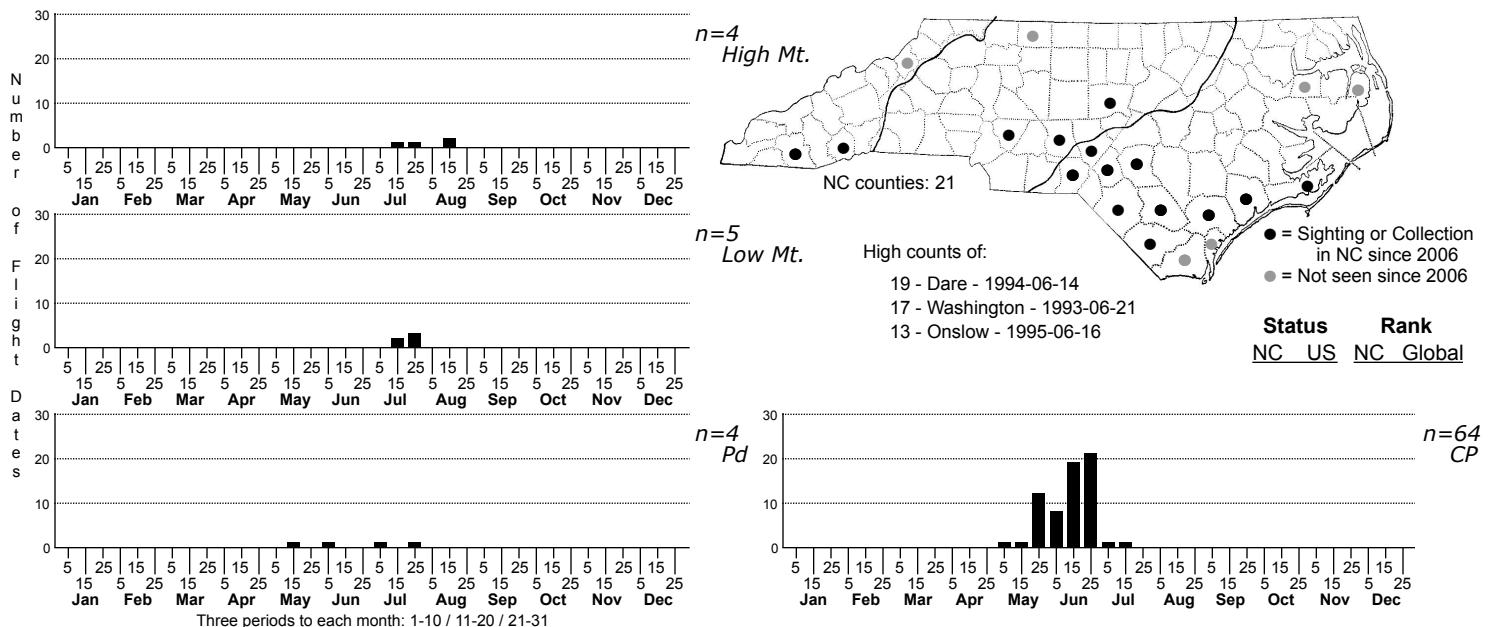


# *Catocala praeclara* Praeclara Underwing



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 XVII (also adopted by Forbes, 1954), which feed mainly on members of the Rosaceae; 12 other members of this group (as redefined by Kons and Borth, 2015b) also occur in North Carolina.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Grote and Robinson (1866); Barnes and McDunnough (1918); Forbes (1954); Sargent (1976)  
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized Underwing with forewings variably shaded with gray or brown and hindwings banded with yellow-and-black similar to other members of this species group. Specimens from the Coastal Plain, where most of our records come from, lack the bright, glossy or metallic green ground color described by Grote and Robinson (1866) and Barnes and McDunnough (1918) and are instead either a dull greenish-, bluish-, brownish-, or violet-gray or are completely suffused with dark, purplish brown; in all forms, there is little contrast between the median and basal areas. A short but distinct and usually forked basal dash is present, including in the brown forms (unlike both *C. charlottae* and *C. manitoba*, where the dash is typically absent or obscure). The antemedian line is well developed and doubled, with a pale filling. The postmedian is also usually well marked, with an inward bend at the fold, forming a strong line paralleling the inner margin and bordered below by a dark brown shade. *Catocala clintonii* is similar but usually larger than *C. praeclara* and possesses longer, narrower dashes and a thinner antemedian line; the inner black band on the hindwing is complete in *C. praeclara* but does not extend along the fold in *C. clintonii*. *Catocala grynea* and *C. alabamae* are more similar in size and also possess relatively uniform forewings with a dark band between the lower portion of the postmedian and inner margin. However, both of these species lack a basal dash and have weak or obscure lines. *C. praeclara* also usually have a dark subapical shade that runs from the upper points on the postmedian line to the outer margin, which is not typical of the other two species. *Catocala dulciola* is yet another similar species, possessing a basal dash and strong, doubled antemedian line. However, there is more contrast in that species between the pale gray median area of the wing and the more strongly darkened basal area. The basal dash is also more arched than in *C. praeclara*, with the lower fork along the anal vein being much stronger than the upper fork, which is much more poorly developed than in *C. praeclara*.

DISTRIBUTION: Found primarily in the Coastal Plain in North Carolina, but with scattered records from the Piedmont and Mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Records from the Coastal Plain come mainly from peatlands, swamp forests, and pond edges. In the Piedmont and Mountains, records come from both lowland and ridge-top habitats.

FOOD: Larvae feed on chokeberry (*Aronia*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), and hawthorns (*Crataegus*) (Wagner et al., 2011). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS:

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: