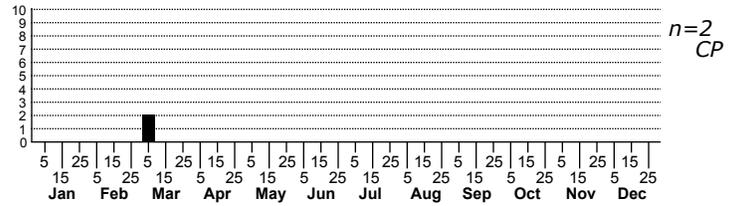
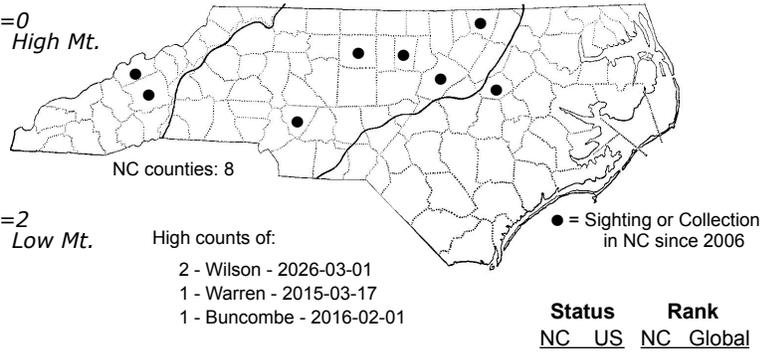
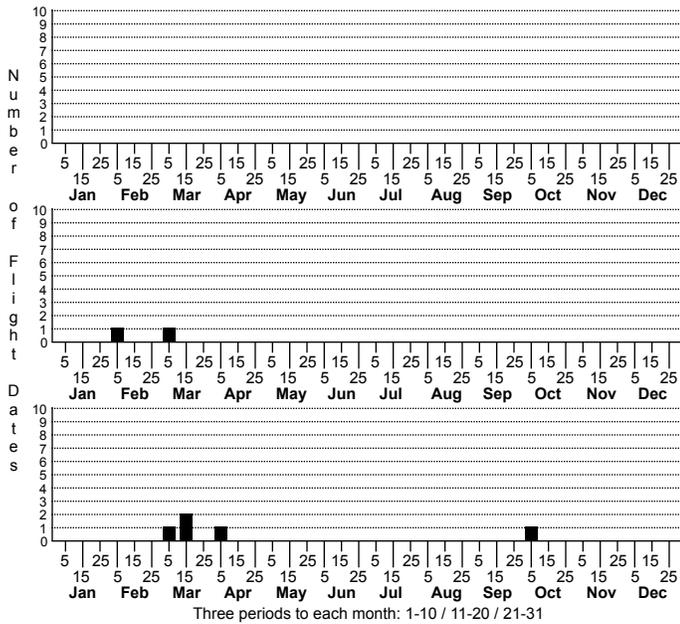


Agonopterix argillacea Clay-colored Agonopterix



FAMILY: Depressariidae SUBFAMILY: Depressariinae TRIBE: [Depressariini]

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: *Agonopterix* is a large holarctic genus with more than 125 species, with most occurring in the Palearctic Region. Currently, there are 47 recognized species in North America. Our species are largely confined to the western mountains.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Clarke (1941); Hodges (1974)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: The following is primarily based on the description by Clarke (1941) and Hodges (1974). The labial palp, antenna, head, thorax, and forewing are pale grayish ochreous. The second segment of the labial palp is suffused and lightly speckled exteriorly with fuscous, while the third segment has a sub-basal and sub-apical annulus (the former poorly defined), and a blackish-fuscous tip. The antenna is darker apically and the face is lighter than the rest of head. The thorax and base of the wing are pale gray and form a curved basal band that extends to the costa where it becomes diffuse and dissipates. The pale band adjoins a blackish-fuscous border that is more developed on the inner half of the wing. It quickly becomes diffuse posteriorly and grades into the the ground color of the forewing.

The remainder of the forewing is sparsely speckled with black scales. A series of indistinct fuscous spots occurs along the costa and around the termen. At the basal one-third, there are two small black discal spots (often containing a few whitish scales) that are obliquely arranged one above the other. These are followed by two larger, whitish discal spots on the cell. The spot at the end of cell (discal spot 'd' of Forbes, 1923) is often narrowly edged with blackish fuscous and brown scales, and is preceded by a similar, brown-edged white spot (discal spot 'c'). A blackish fuscous blotch or cloudy dusting is present near the middle of the wing that adjoins discal spot 'c' and often extends to discal spot 'd'. The cilia are concolorous with the ground color of the forewing. The hindwing and cilia are pale grayish ochreous, and the latter has a light-fuscous band at the base. The legs are pale grayish ochreous and suffused with blackish fuscous except at the joints. Hodges (1974) noted that this wide-ranging species is highly variable, with the ground color varying from pale to dark brown. This species is most similar to *A. canadensis*, but discal spots 'c' and 'd' are whitish versus black in *A. canadensis*. North Carolina specimens often have the first two spots with both black and white scales, and in some instances the black scales may be missing (worn), leaving only the white scales.

DISTRIBUTION: *Agonopterix argillacea* is a very wide-ranging species. It occurs in Canada from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, and in the western US from Washington south to California, and from Montana to Colorado. It is widespread in the eastern US, with the range extending from the northeastern states to eastern Texas and Florida. As of 2023, we only have a few records from the Piedmont and one from the low mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: The habitats that are used in North Carolina are largely unknown. As of 2023, we only have a few records for the species, the majority of which are from residential neighborhoods.

FOOD: The larvae are polyphagous and feed on deciduous hardwoods (Prentice, 1966; Hodges, 1974; Godfrey et al., 1987; Robinson et al. 2010; Beadle and Leckie, 2018). The reported hosts include Gray Alder (*Alnus incana*), False Indigo-bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*), Trembling Aspen (*P. tremuloides*), Common Hoptree (*Ptelea trifoliata*), Bebb's Willow (*Salix bebbiana*), Arroyo Willow (*S. lasiolepis*) and presumably several other willow species. Of these, only *Amorpha*, *Ptelea*, and species of *Salix* are common in North Carolina. The hosts that are used in North Carolina have not been documented as of 2023. Prentice (1966) found that willows were the most important hosts in Canada.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights. The larval life history is poorly documented, so we encourage individuals to search for larvae on willows or other potential hosts.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SU

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

COMMENTS: We currently do not have sufficient information on the distribution and abundance of this species in North Carolina to assess its conservation status.