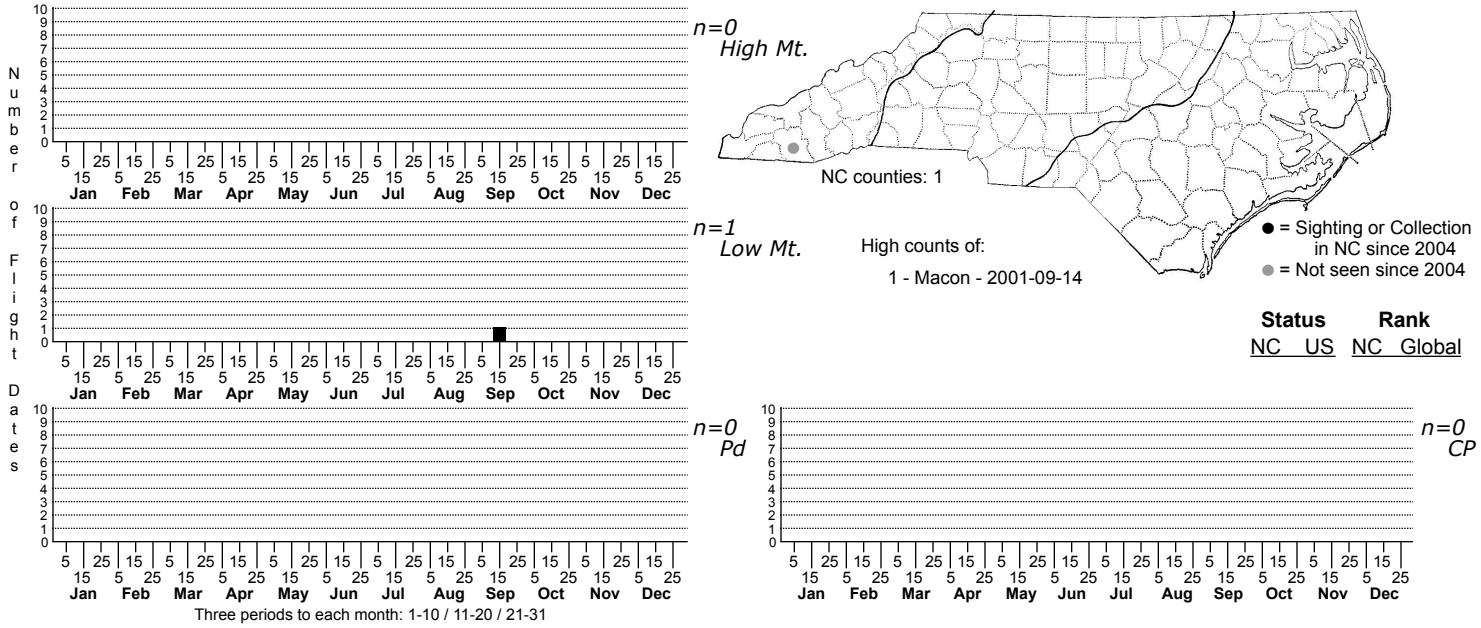
Ponometia tortricina No common name



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Acontiinae TRIBE: Acontiini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of 34 species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010), six of which have been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS: MPG, BugGuide, BAMONA, BOLD, Poole (2017), Pacific Northwest Moths
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Poole (2017)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium-small, yellowish to greenish-gray Acontiine. The ground color of the forewings, along with the head and body, ranges from dirty yellow to mouse gray (Forbes, 1954). Transverse lines are missing, and the orbicular and reniform are present only as small dark spots; a dark, oblique shade may be present running up from the inner margin to the center of the wing (Forbes, 1954; Poole, 2017). Hindwings are light brownish-gray. Ponometia parvula is similar in size and markings, but is a brighter yellow, has darker shading extending in from the outer margins, and lacks the oblique dark marking extending inward from the inner margin (Poole, 2017).

DISTRIBUTION: Our sole record comes from the mountains in Macon County

FLIGHT COMMENT: Flies in September in North Carolina but we have no information on its overall flight period

HABITAT: This species is associated with prairies and other grasslands in the Mid-West and West (Metzler et al., 2005). In North Carolina, however, our one record comes from a clearing on a forested mountain slope (see Metzler, et al.)

FOOD: Unknown (Poole, 2017)

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Comes to blacklight but to an unknown extent

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S1S3]

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

COMMENTS: This species is one of several primarily prairie species that have been recorded in North Carolina. Most of these are probably relicts from the Hypsithermal interval, roughly 7,000 to 5,000 years ago, when the climate was significantly warmer and drier, allowing western species to invade eastern North America. Most of the moths that appear to be Hypsithermal relicts - stranded following the return of cooler, wetter conditions -- are associated with prairie plants and occur in open, somewhat prairie-like habitats, e.g., sandhills. In the case of Ponometia tortricina, however, these connections are far less clear. Surveys need to be conducted for this species in glade and barrens habitats in the southern mountains to document its status as a resident species in North Carolina and to clarify its conservation needs.