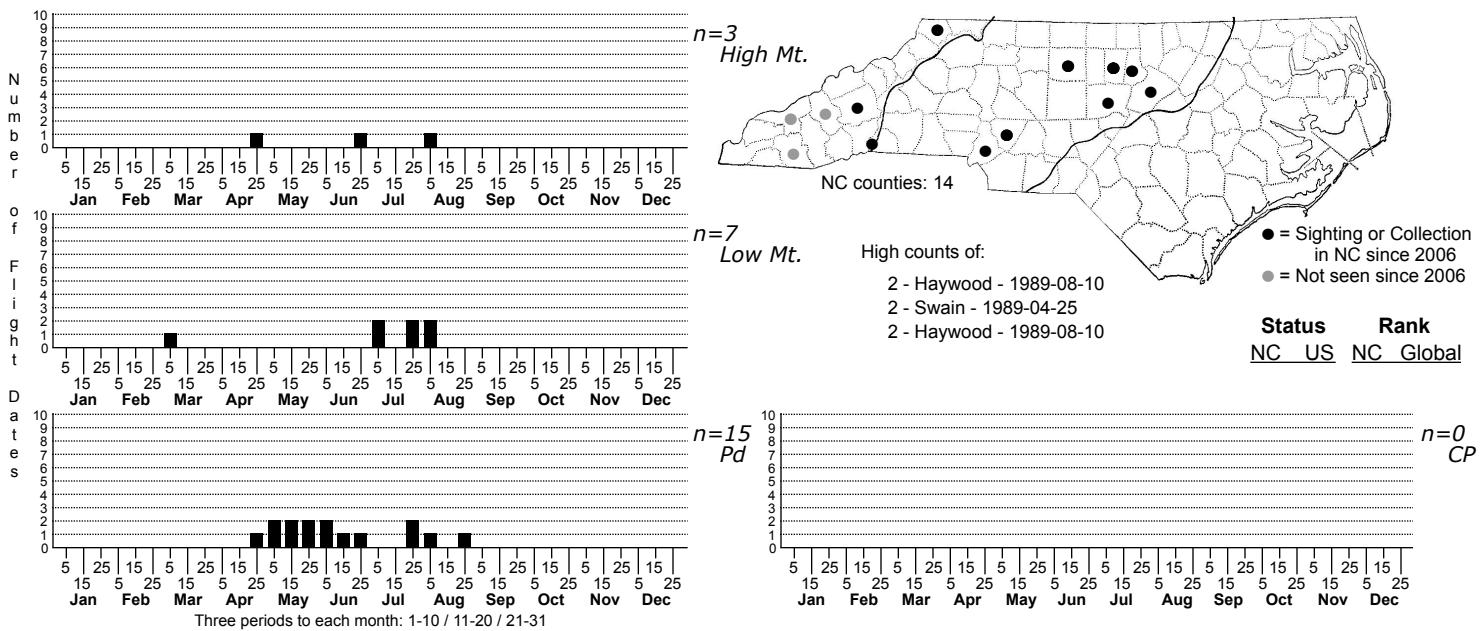


Acronicta rubricoma Hackberry Dagger



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Acronictinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of 74 species in this genus found in North America north of Mexico (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020), 42 of which have been recorded in North Carolina. *Acronicta rubricoma* belongs to Forbes's Group I, which in North Carolina also includes *A. americana*, *A. hastulifera*, *A. dactylina*, and *A. lepusculina*.

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

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium-large Dagger with pale gray to darker brownish-gray forewings. The antemedian and postmedian are double, with a white filling. The antemedian is strongly looped, with particularly long loops located on the lower half of the wing. The orbicular is usually ocellate -- pale with a darker gray center. The reniform is large, horseshoe-shaped and marked with a dark shade. The veins in the subterminal area characteristically have heavy dark lines, typically originating from black dots on the subterminal (Forbes, 1954). Hindwings are gray with darker veins and a dark postmedian band. *Acronicta americana*, *A. hastulifera*, and *A. dactylina* are similar in pattern but are larger and have a generally smoother appearance. *A. impleta* is similar in size and color and also has an ocellate orbicular and darkened reniform. However, it has narrower wings and either lacks or has more obscure subterminal dashes. *A. impleta* also has more uniformly colored hindwings, lacking the postmedian band found in *A. rubricoma*.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Piedmont records come primarily from rich bottomland forests. Mountain records, however, come mainly from upland forests.

FOOD: Larvae feed on hackberry (*Celtis*) species as well as elm (*Ulmus*) (Wagner et al., 2011). In North Carolina, we have recorded the species feeding on Sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*) and Common Hackberry (*C. occidentalis*).

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 SNR [S2S4]

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

COMMENTS: