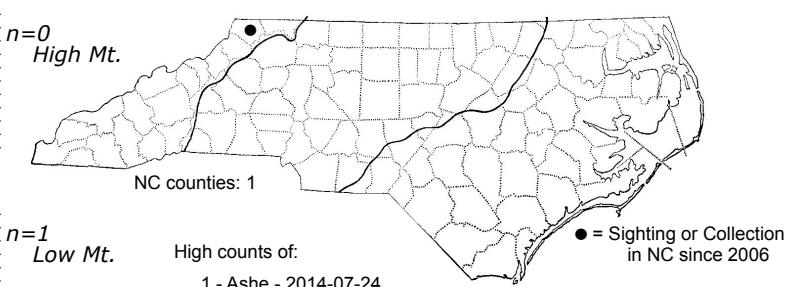
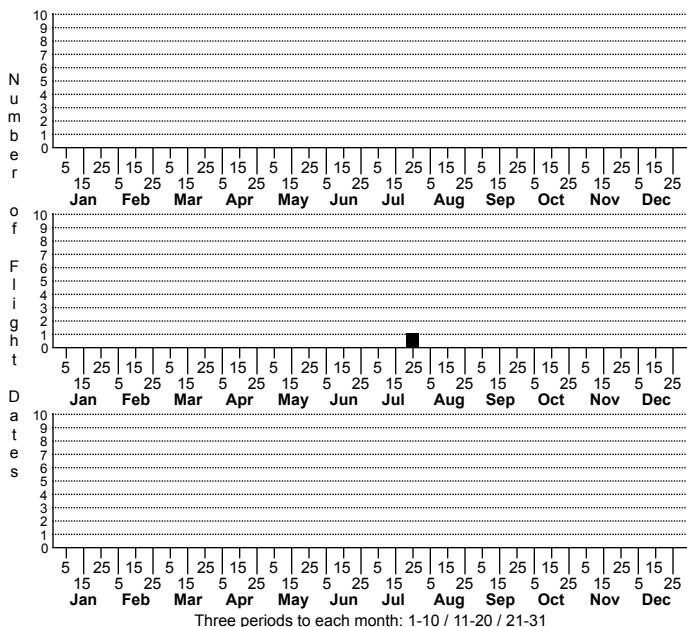
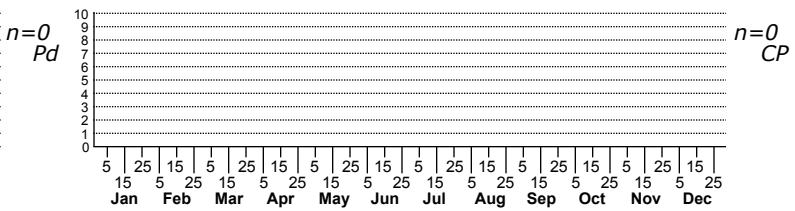


# *Acronicta lepusculina* Cottonwood Dagger



Status Rank  
NC US NC Global



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 lepusculina* was included in Species Group I by Forbes (1954), which in North Carolina also includes *A. rubricoma*, *A. americana*, *A. hastulifera*, and *A. dactylina*.

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, usually with whitish or pale gray forewings. A basal dash is usually present, at least as a smudge, unlike in other members of Forbes's Group I, where it is typically absent. The antemedian is usually represented only by a dark spot on the costa and the fold; a dark spot may also be located on the costa representing the median line. The postmedian is normally complete and moderately dentate. As in *Acronicta hastulifera* and *A. dactylina*, it may be accented by dark shading on the outer side, particularly where the anal dash crosses. The orbicular is usually small, obscure, or absent; the reniform is better defined and marked with a dark shade. Hindwings are white without dark lines on the veins. *A. hastulifera* and *A. dactylina* are similar in size, pattern, and color but lack the basal dash and usually have less sharply defined dark spots (Forbes, 1954).

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Our one record comes from a ridge top with an extensive cove forest on a north-facing slope. Balsam Poplars have been observed along some of the creeks in the general area but not close to where the specimen was collected.

FOOD: Larvae feed primarily on cottonwoods and other *Populus* species, but have also reported on alder (*Alnus*), birch (*Betula*), and willow (*Salix*) (Wagner et al., 2011). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S1S2]

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

COMMENTS: We have only a single record for this northern species. Poplars are present in the New River tributaries near where this species was collected, indicating that there may be a resident population in the area