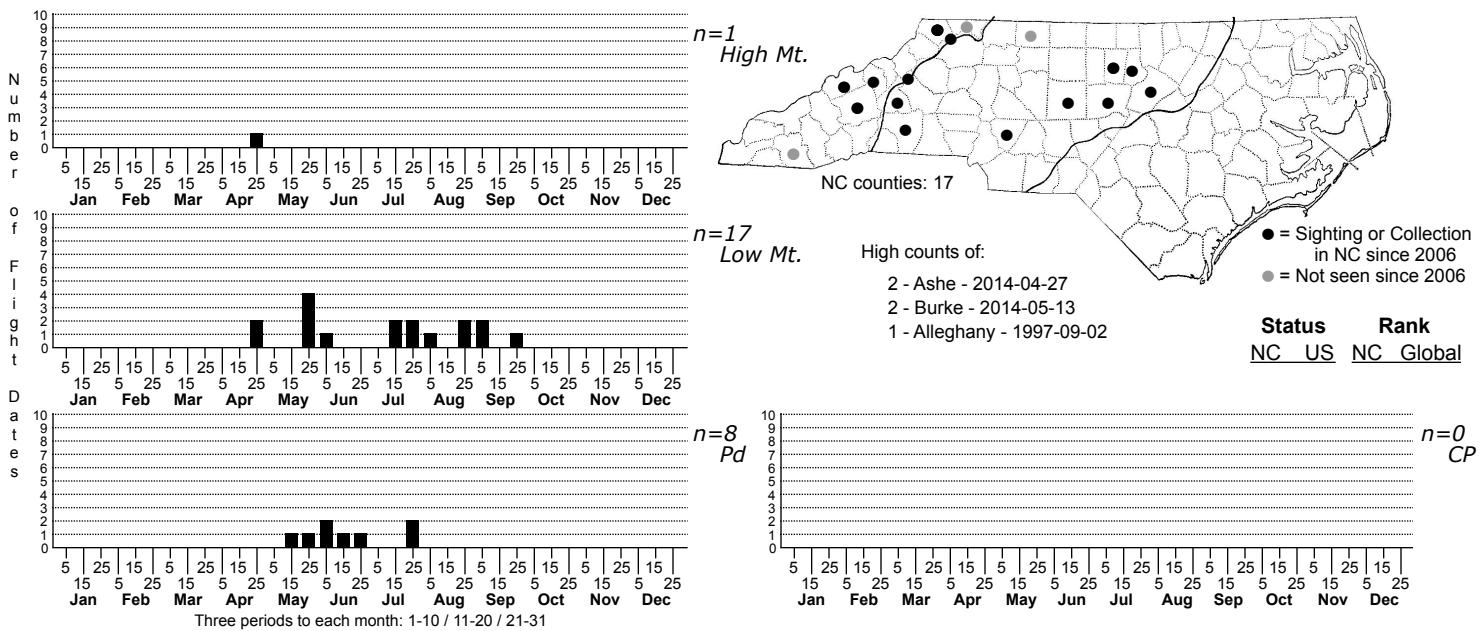


Acronicta radcliffei Radcliffe's Dagger



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. *< i>Acronicta radcliffei< /i>* is a member of Species Group II of Forbes (1954), which includes 17 additional species in North Carolina.

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-sized, pale gray Dagger with a distinctive pattern of fine black lines. The ground color is a smooth pale gray without any conspicuous brown shading. The basal area is crossed on the inner side by linear black dashes that extend outward past the antemedian. The antemedian is also narrow and black, bordered outwardly with a band of gray that is paler than the ground color. This line intersects the basal dashes at a right angle, with the outer portion running to the costa. Unique among our species of *Acronicta*, the inner portion of the antemedian runs a slanted to slightly excurred course to the inner margin. The postmedian is also quite distinct, consisting of a fairly smooth black line bordered on the anterior side by a pale gray band. From the costa, it forms a wide, smooth arc beyond the cell, followed by a couple of small teeth at the cubitus and then forming a smooth inward curve to the inner margin, where it is intersected by a black anal dash. No apical dash is present, however. Both the orbicular and reniform are large, filled with the ground color and partially outlined in black. The hindwings are fuscous.

< i>Acronicta interrupta< /i> and *< i>A. spinigera< /i>* are similar in size and appearance but have more strongly dentate, doubled postmedian lines, spots that are more completely outlined with black, and usually well-marked apical dashes.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Schmidt and Anweiler (2020) describe the habitat of this species as primarily dry woodlands, forest edges, and shrublands. However, our records also include a number of mesic forests.

FOOD: Larvae are oligophagous, feeding on cherry and other woody members of the Rosaceae. Wagner et al. (2011) list apple (*< i>Malus< /i>*), chokecherry (*< i>Aronia< /i>*), hawthorn (*< i>Crataegus< /i>*), mountain-ash (*< i>Sorbus< /i>*), and serviceberry (*< i>Amelanchier< /i>*). The HOSTS database also lists ash (*< i>Fraxinus< /i>*), elm (*< i>Ulmus< /i>*), and willow (*< i>Salix< /i>*) (Robinson et al., 2010). In North Carolina, we have observed the species feeding on Black Cherry (*< i>Prunus serotina< /i>*) and American Mountain-ash (*< i>Sorbus americana< /i>*).

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: