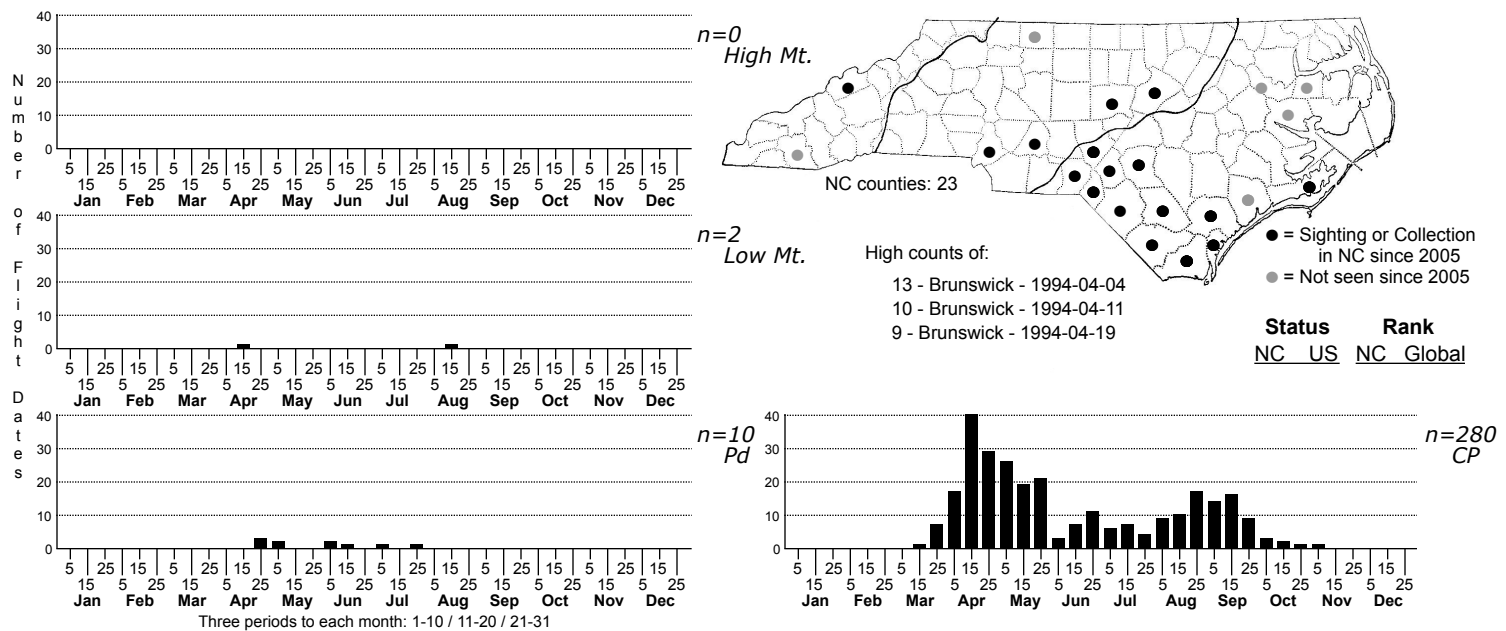


Acronicta tritona Triton Dagger



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 tritona* 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: The ground color is dark violet gray, with brown shading over the reniform and following the postmedian line (Forbes, 1954). The basal line is black, thin, and branched. The anal dash is also black and usually prominent but the apical dash is missing. The antemedian is poorly defined or absent. The postmedian is single, black, and weakly toothed with a deep indentation at the fold. The orbicular is very small and the reniform is brown bordered anteriorly with a black curved line. The hindwing is fuscous.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Coastal Plain records come mainly from savannas, flatwoods, and sand ridges with only a few from blackwater swamps and pocosins. Piedmont and Mountain records come almost entirely from dry ridges.

FOOD: Larvae feed on heaths, particularly blueberries (*Vaccinium*), but also on azaleas (*Rhododendron*) and possibly other heaths (Wagner et al., 2011). In North Carolina, the species has been recorded feeding on Coastal Azalea (*Rhododendron atlanticum*), and J.B. Sullivan reared a larva from Sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*).

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: