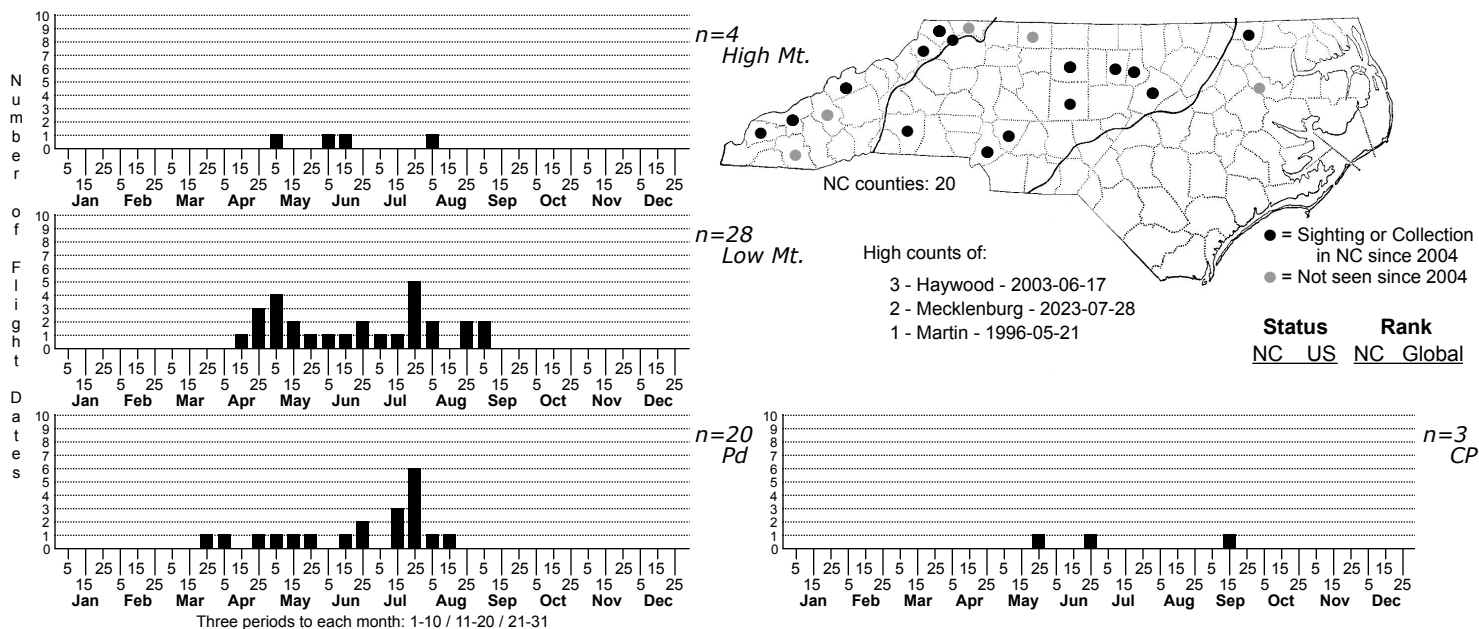


Acronicta interrupta Interrupted Dagger



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. This species is placed in subgenus *Agriopodes* by Schmidt and Anweiler, and in the Hasta Species Group. Other members of this group in North Carolina include *Acronicta hamamelis*, *A. lithospila*, *A. innotata*, *A. betulae*, *A. radcliffei*, *A. hasta*, *A. laetifica*, *A. spingigera*, *A. superans*, *A. morula*, and *A. lobeliae*.

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: This species resembles other members of the Hasta Group but usually lacks the dash (sometimes faintly marked) connecting the orbicular and reniform spots that is typically present in other members of this group. It is also generally more smoothly gray with less strongly outlined orbicular and reniform spots and has a more evenly gray hindwing (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). Compared to *A. laetifica*, which can be closely similar, *interrupta* has comparatively darker shading along the postmedial line and in the orbicular spot and has a more evenly gray medial area (Anweiler and Schmidt). Melanic specimens of this group are probably best distinguished genitally.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: In the Coastal Plain, we have records only from brownwater river bottomland forests, where elm may be the most likely host plant. In the Piedmont, records also come from rich habitats, including some fairly dry upland sites with mafic rock formations. The same is true in the mountains, where there are a number of records from the Amphibolite Mountains and from rich cove forests elsewhere. A few records come from high elevation forests, where Pin Cherry and mountain-ash are common.

FOOD: Larvae feed on a wide range of hardwood species (Wagner et al., 2011; Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). Prentice (1962) found larvae most commonly on elm, but also on Fire (=Pin) Cherry, mountain ash, hop-hornbeam, and birches. Wagner et al. report that captive larvae show a preference for Fire Cherry and apple over Black Cherry. In North Carolina, they have been observed feeding on elm (including American Elm), but likely utilize a variety of other hardwoods.

OBSERVATION_METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 S3S4

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

COMMENTS: