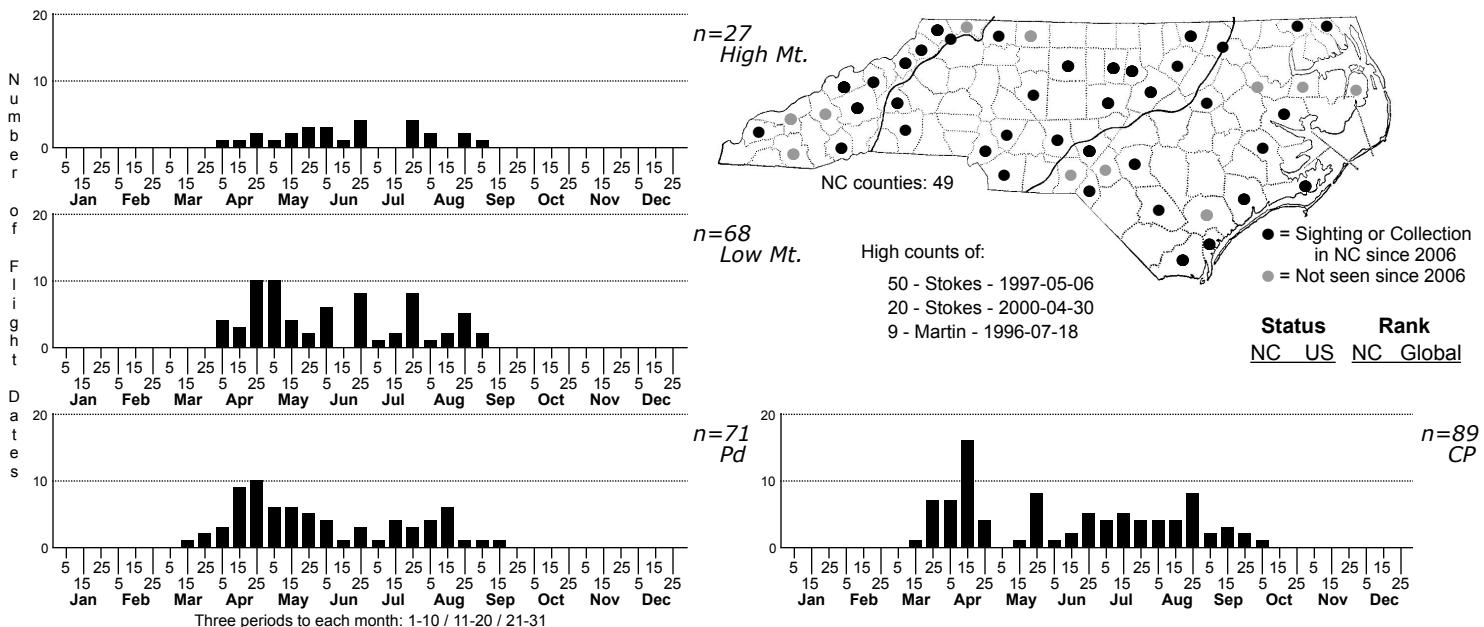


# *Acronicta lobeliae* Greater Oak Dagger



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. interrupta*, *A. laetifica*, *A. spinigera*, *A. superans*, and *A. morula*.

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 large, pale gray dagger with three strong dashes and a thick bar connecting the reniform and orbicular spots (Forbes, 1954). Larger than either *A. hasta* or *A. laetifica*; the forewing length in *A. lobeliae* is > 21 mm but barely over 20 mm in the other two (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). *A. hasta* is also usually darker gray, has a thicker but shorter basal dash, and has a weaker or absent apical dash (Forbes, 1954). *A. laetifica* has a whiter ground color and finer, more contrasting dashes. Some individuals of *A. lobeliae* are difficult to distinguish from the other two species based on photographs alone; measurements of the forewing are always helpful.

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs statewide

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Wagner (2005) lists woodlands and forests as habitat. Our records come from nearly the entire spectrum of oak-containing habitats, from maritime forests and sandridges in the Coastal Plain, to alluvial forests and high mountain ridges

FOOD: Larvae feed on oaks, including species in both the red and white oak groups (Wagner et al., 2011). In North Carolina, they have been recorded feeding on White Oak (*Quercus alba*) and Willow Oak (*Q. phellos*).

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S4S5]

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

COMMENTS: