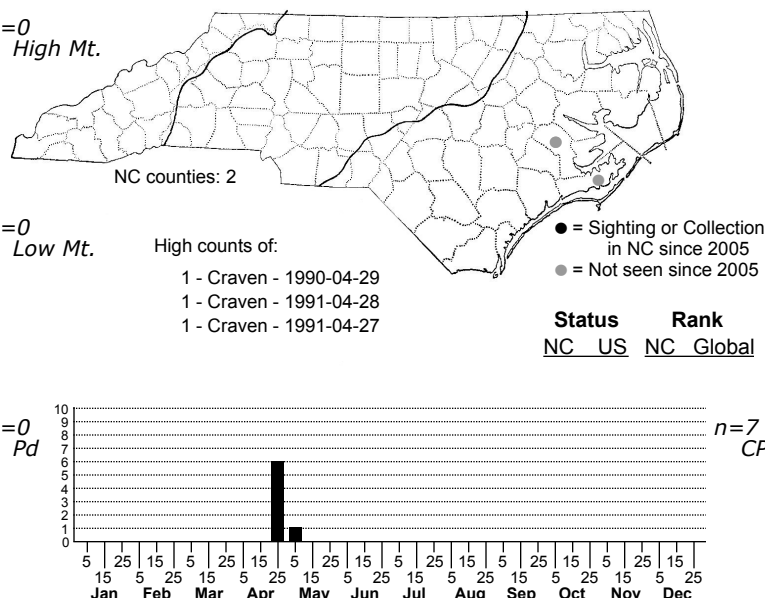


Acronicta perblanda None



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. Included in subgenus *Jochaeaera* by Schmidt and Anweiler (2020), which has three other members, including *A. funeralis* in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Not included in the field guides

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Ferguson (1988); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A small, pale gray *Acronicta* with a distinctive black streak running lengthwise across the forewing (Ferguson, 1988); hindwings are grayish brown. Not likely to be confused with any other species of *Acronicta* or even other Noctuids.

DISTRIBUTION: Known in North Carolina from just a small area in the tidewater region.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Sullivan's records for this species in North Carolina are from late April and early May, which are consistent with dates recorded elsewhere within the range of this species (Ferguson, 1988).

HABITAT: All collections known to Ferguson (1988) -- including from North Carolina -- were made either within or close to stands of Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). Our two sites are both located in estuaries and are subject to tidal influences.

FOOD: The host plants are apparently unknown. The species was previously thought to feed on cypress due to the associations with cypress containing habitats, which matches the distribution we have observed in North Carolina. But we are unaware of any confirmed feeding records, and the species has been recorded in northwest Georgia, where there isn't any cypress.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Our records are all from blacklight traps. Within the narrow flight period and at known population sites, *A. perblanda* appears to be trapped regularly. We know of no records from bait.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G3G4 SH

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation, however, does not confer any legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: This species is considered rare throughout its range, from North Carolina to Texas. In North Carolina, this species is known from only two nearby sites where it was found in 1974, 1990, and 1991. Although more needs to be learned about its detectability using black light traps, cypress-containing habitats have been well-sampled in North Carolina, with many samples having been made in April and early May, spanning the known flight period of this species. While cypress swamps themselves are still fairly secure, those located in tidewater areas -- including the sites where our collections were made -- are threatened by salt-water intrusion due to sea-level rise; large expanses of former estuarine cypress swamps have already been converted to brackish marshes and this trend continues. *Acronicta perblanda* is currently regarded as historic in North Carolina by the Natural Heritage Program. An effort needs to be made to determine whether it still exists at its original capture sites.