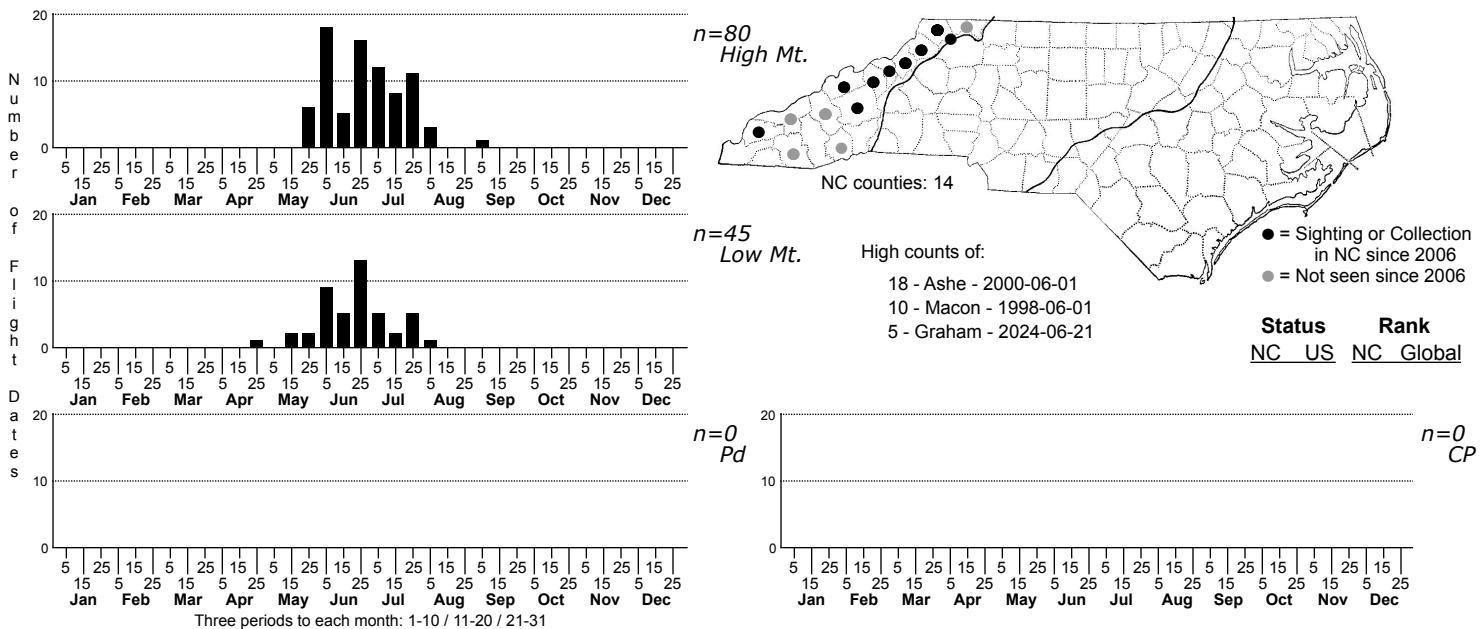


Acronicta fragilis Fragile Dagger



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 fragilis* 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 strongly marked species, often completely marked in black and white (Forbes, 1954), but with the white sometimes replaced with gray or grayish brown in North Carolina specimens. The antemedial and postmedial lines are both white and strongly scalloped to dentate. A medial line, if present is usually dark and merges with the inner line of the reniform. In paler specimens, a dark basal dash is present, along with a dark dash in the fold between the antemedial and medial lines. The subterminal area is typically jet black and a series of dark terminal spots is usually present. Both the orbicular and reniform spots are white or pale gray. The hindwings are also white. *Acronicta noctivaga* is similarly marked with contrasting black and white patches but has a dark rather than pale reniform.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Schmidt and Anweiler (2020) describe this species as associated with cool, temperate, moist-to-wet woodland habitats. Our records come from alluvial and cove forests at low elevations in the Mountains and more commonly in high elevation forests.

FOOD: Larvae feed on a wide range of hardwood trees and shrubs. Species in the Rosaceae seem to be preferred, with members of the Betulaceae also commonly used (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). Wagner et al. (2011) specifically list alder (*Alnus*), apple (*Malus*), beech (*Fagus*), birch (*Betula*), cherry and plum (*Prunus*), mountain-ash (*Sorbus*), rose (*Rosa*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), and willow (*Salix*).

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: