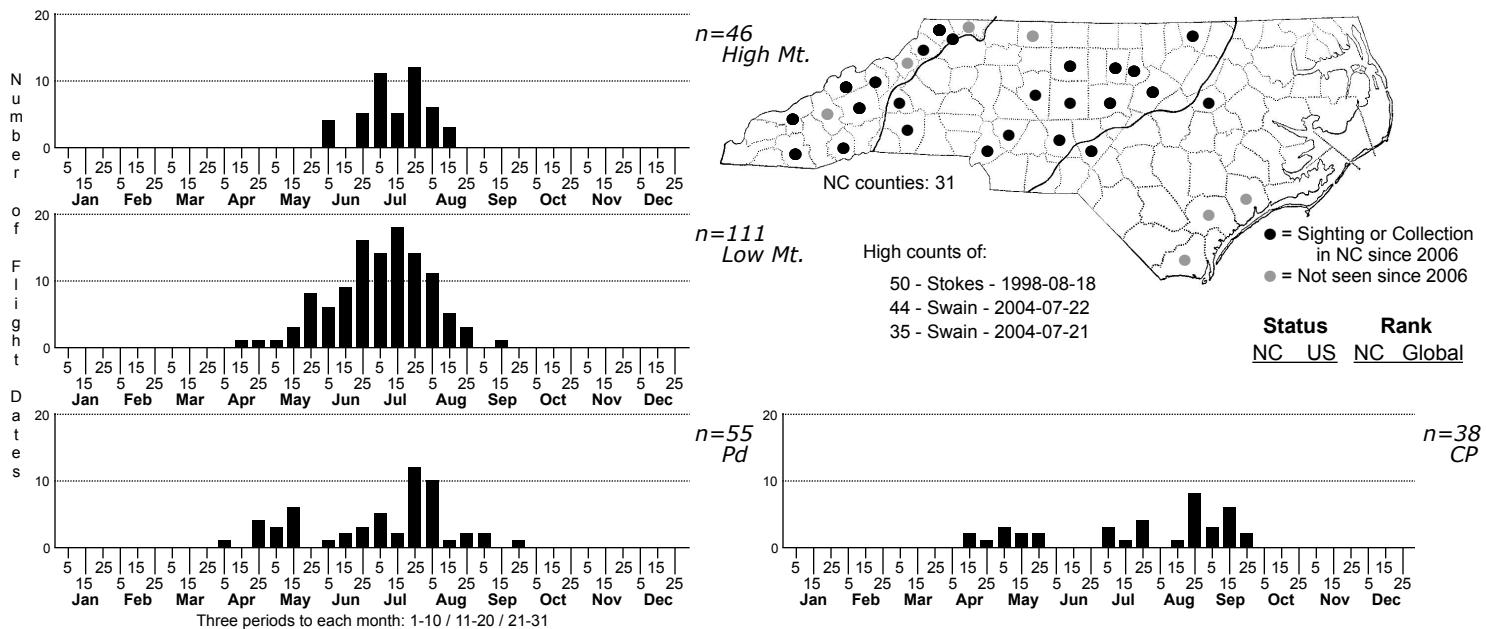


Acronicta ovata Ovate Dagger



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 *Lepitotreuma* by Schmidt and Anweiler, and in the *Increta* Species Group. Other members of this group in North Carolina include *A. albarufa*, *A. exilis*, *A. modica* (= *haesitata*), *A. immodica* (= *modica*), *A. increta*, and *A. tristis*.

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: *Acronicta ovata* gets its name from the prominently oval basal patch, but is often confused with other members of the *Increta* Group; usually, it is the combination of several characters that serves to distinguish it (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). The ground color of the forewings is usually medium gray with a greenish tint. A patch of rusty or yellow-tan scales usually exists overlaying the reniform spot. The antemedian line is dark, but broken -- not reaching the costa or the inner margin. Both the basal and tornal dashes are present but are thin. The hindwings are fuscous. *A. exilis* can have similar markings but is much smaller and usually paler. *A. albarufa* can also have similar forewing markings but the hindwings are pure white rather than fuscous. Other members of the *Increta* Group differ in one or more of the features described for *A. ovata* (see Schmidt and Anweiler for more details).

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Our records come from the entire spectrum of oak-containing habitats, including maritime forests, sand ridges, alluvial forests, and high elevation mesic forests

FOOD: Larvae feed primarily on oaks (*Quercus*), particularly White Oak (*Q. alba*) and Northern Red Oak (*Q. rubra*), but have also been reported from beech (*Fagus*) and chestnut (*Castanea*) (Wagner et al., 2011). We do not have any specific feeding records in North Carolina.

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: