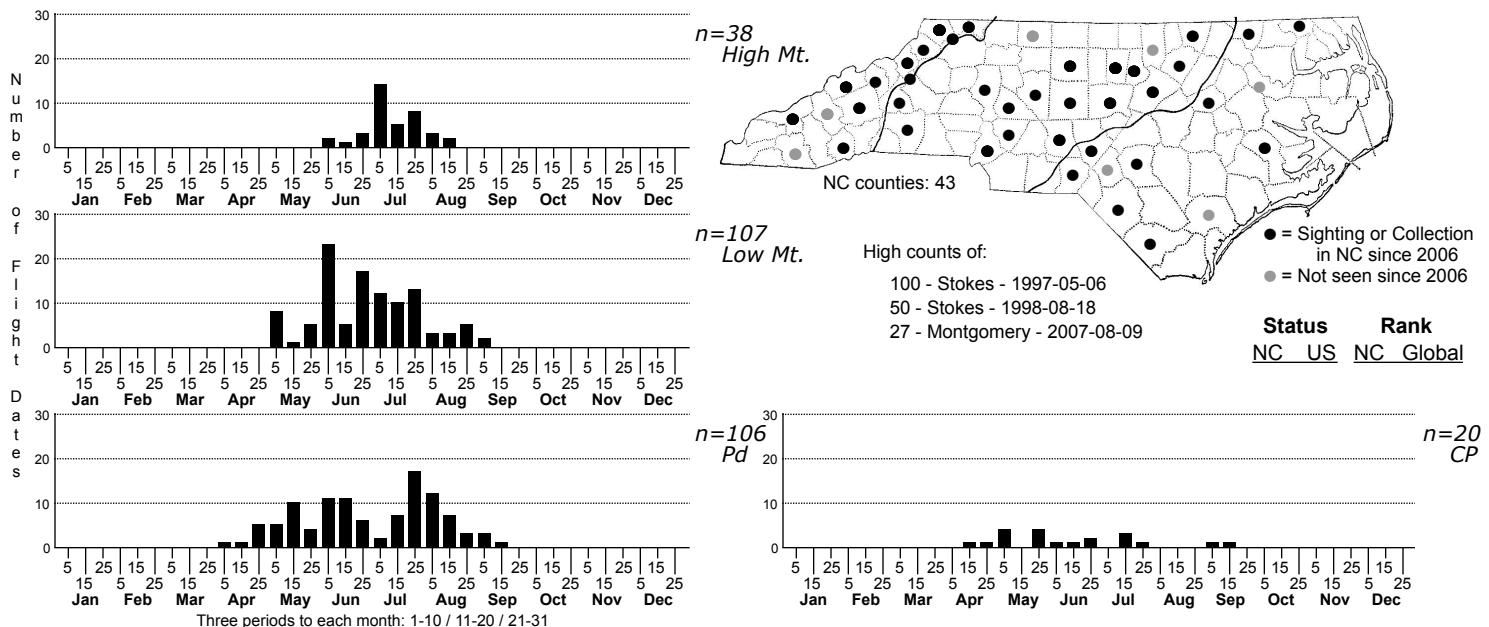


Acronicta modica Hesitant Dagger



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. ovata*, *A. exilis*, *A. immodica* (= *A. modica*), *A. increta*, and *A. tristis*.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized, nearly uniform gray Dagger. The ground color of the forewings is bluish gray, but with small patches of yellowish- or greenish-brown sometimes present, especially in the area between the orbicular and reniform, but not widely suffused across the wing as in *A. immodica*. The basal area is not darker than the rest of the wing but the antemedian line is typically dark and conspicuous as is the basal dash; as in *ovata*, the antemedian can be incomplete, not reaching the costa (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). The other transverse lines are weakly edged and the anal dash is often diffuse or obscure. Hindwings are pale fuscous. *A. modica* is similar in size and pattern but usually has a more diffuse yellowish tinge across the forewings, a less contrasting antemedian line, and sharper and more conspicuous anal dashes (Forbes, 1954; Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). Neither *A. modica* (= *haesitata*) nor *A. immodica* has a reddish shade at the reniform, unlike specimens of *A. albarufa*, *A. ovata*, *A. exilis*, or *A. increta*.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Most of our records come from mesic hardwood forests.

FOOD: Larvae feed mainly on oaks, particularly White Oak (*Quercus alba*), but have also been reported (but needing confirmation) on beech (*Fagus*) and chestnut (*Castanea*) (Wagner et al., 2011). We do not have any 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: