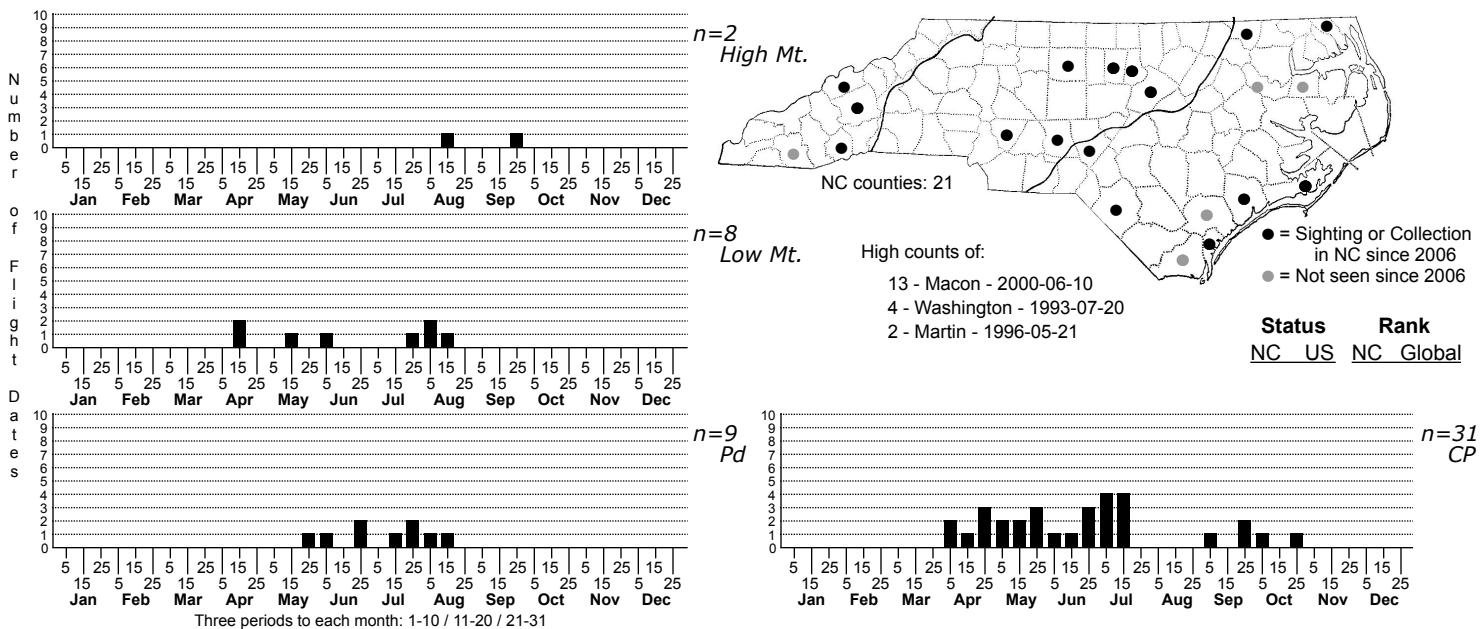


Acronicta clarescens Clear Dagger



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 clarescens* is a member of Species Group II of Forbes (1954), which includes 17 additional species in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984; as *Acronicta pruni*)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: Normally easily identified by a tuft of yellowish, stiff scales at the anterior of the thorax located just behind the collar; this tuft can be missing in some specimens, however (Forbes, 1954). The ground color of the forewings is typically a light ash gray. A fine, black basal dash is present but partially obscured by a more smudgy black shade in the fold. An anal and apical black dash are also present but also somewhat smudged. The antemedian is double, with the anterior portion merging with the basal dash; the posterior portion is usually free. The postmedian is also double and regularly scalloped, with a long, outward-pointing tooth on the anal vein (just before the anal dash). The orbicular is usually ovoid and filled with the pale ground color. The reniform is often shaded with a fuscous or brownish shade that extends in from the costa as a diffuse and partial median band. A terminal series of dark gray dots is present. The hindwings are whitish but shaded with fuscous, darker in the female. Although *morula* also has a ochre tuft on the thorax, it is usually larger and more elongated; the ground color of that species is often shaded with ochre. *Acronicta spinigera* is also similar but lacks the yellow thoracic tuft and has finer, unsmudged dashes.

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Our records come from a wide variety of habitats, but mostly from low-lying areas near water

FOOD: Larvae are oligophagous, feeding on many woody species of the Rosaceae. Wagner et al. (2011) specifically list apple (*Malus*), cherry and plum (*Prunus*), chokeberry (*Aronia*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*), mountain-ash (*Sorbus*), and willow (*Salix*). In North Carolina, larvae have been recorded feeding on serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), hawthorn, cherry, and cultivated pear.

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: