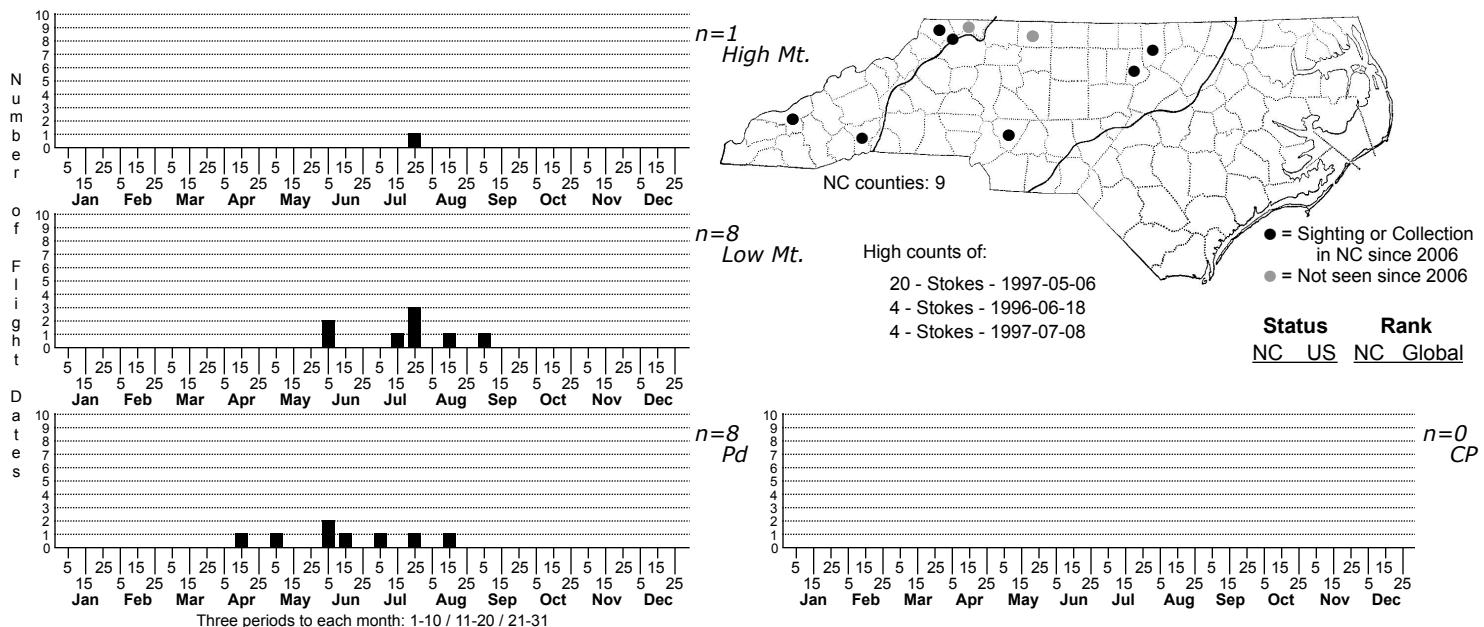


Acronicta tristis Sad Dagger



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 *Lepitoreuma* by Schmidt and Anweiler (2020), and in the *Increta* Species Group. Other members of this group in North Carolina include *A. albarufa*, *A. ovata*, *A. modica* (*A. haesitata*), *A. immodica* (*A. modica*), *A. increta*, and *A. exilis*.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized, dark gray Dagger. The ground color is ash-gray to coal black, without any tinge of green or yellow (Forbes, 1954). The basal area is darker than the rest of the wing and the pattern of lines and spots is similar to other members of the *Modica* group, particularly the *A. increta* complex. Dark phase specimens of *A. increta* are especially difficult to distinguish from *A. tristis*, but usually have some tinge of green or are else a paler gray (Forbes, 1954; Rings et al., 1992).

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: *Acronicta tristis* appears to be less tolerant of xeric habitats than other members of the *Increta* Species Group (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). Except for two low-elevation Piedmont sites, our records come from cool, mesic hardwood forests in the Mountains and from higher monadnocks in the western Piedmont.

FOOD: Larvae have been recorded on oak (*Quercus*) and beech (*Fagus*) (Wagner et al., 2011). We do not have any feeding records in North Carolina.

OBSERVATION METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR [S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: