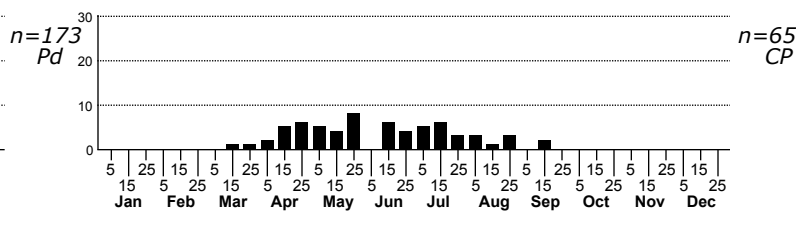
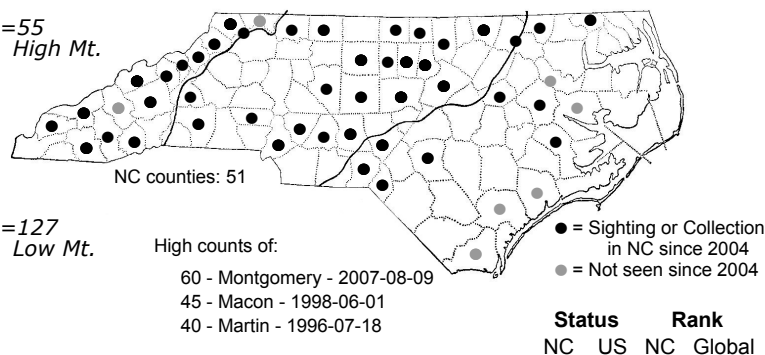
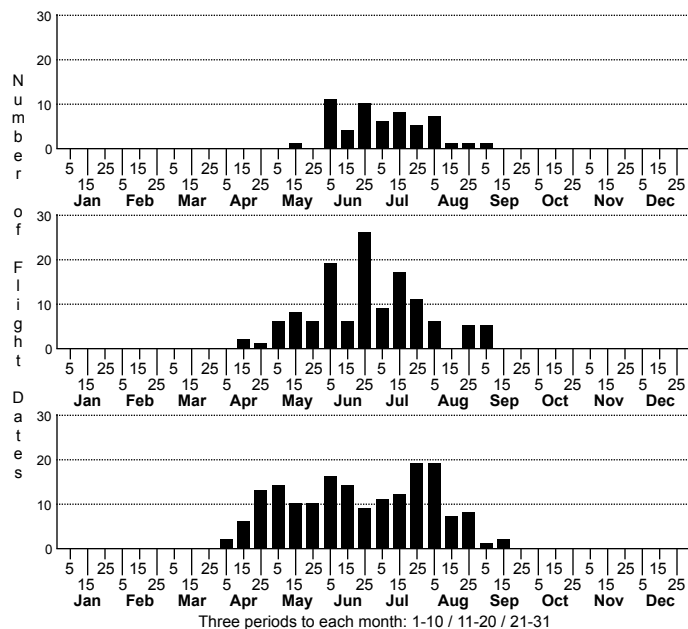


Acronicta increta Southern Oak Dagger



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 *Acronicta albarufa*, *A. ovata*, *A. modica* (= *haesitata*), *A. immodica* (= *modica*), *A. exilis*, and *A. tristis*.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

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

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized dagger. The ground color varies from pale gray (form *inclara*) to dark gray with a greenish or olive cast (typical *increta*) (Forbes, 1954). In addition to having a dark basal dash and antemedian line, most of the basal area is conspicuously darker than the median portion of the wing, giving this species a bicolored appearance. The antemedian line is double and extends from the base of the wing all the way to the costa (in *ovata*, the antemedian typically fades out before reaching the costa); a yellowish spot or patch is usually visible at the base of the inner margin. The subterminal dash found in other members of this group is weak or absent but a dark wedge is often present that extends from the outer margin in along the fold. The orbicular is outlined with pale gray, with a spot of the same color in the center; otherwise the filling consists of the ground color and the orbicular overall does not strongly contrast with the rest of the median area. The reniform is larger but similar in outline, and usually is marked with reddish or greenish. The hindwings are fuscous with darker veins. Most other *Acronicta* species are not as bicolored in appearance as *A. increta*. *Acronicta tristis*, however, is very similar in wing pattern but lacks the greenish cast found in the dark forms of *A. increta* (Forbes, 1954).

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Please refer to the flight charts.

HABITAT: Wagner (2005) lists barrens, woodlands, and forests as habitat. Our record come mainly from mesic rather than dry sites.

FOOD: Larvae have been reported from Chestnut, Oaks (mainly Red and Black), Beech; also Hazel and Birch in the North (Wagner et al., 2011). In North Carolina, we have observed the species feeding on White Oak and American Beech.

OBSERVATION_METHODS:

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 S5

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

COMMENTS: