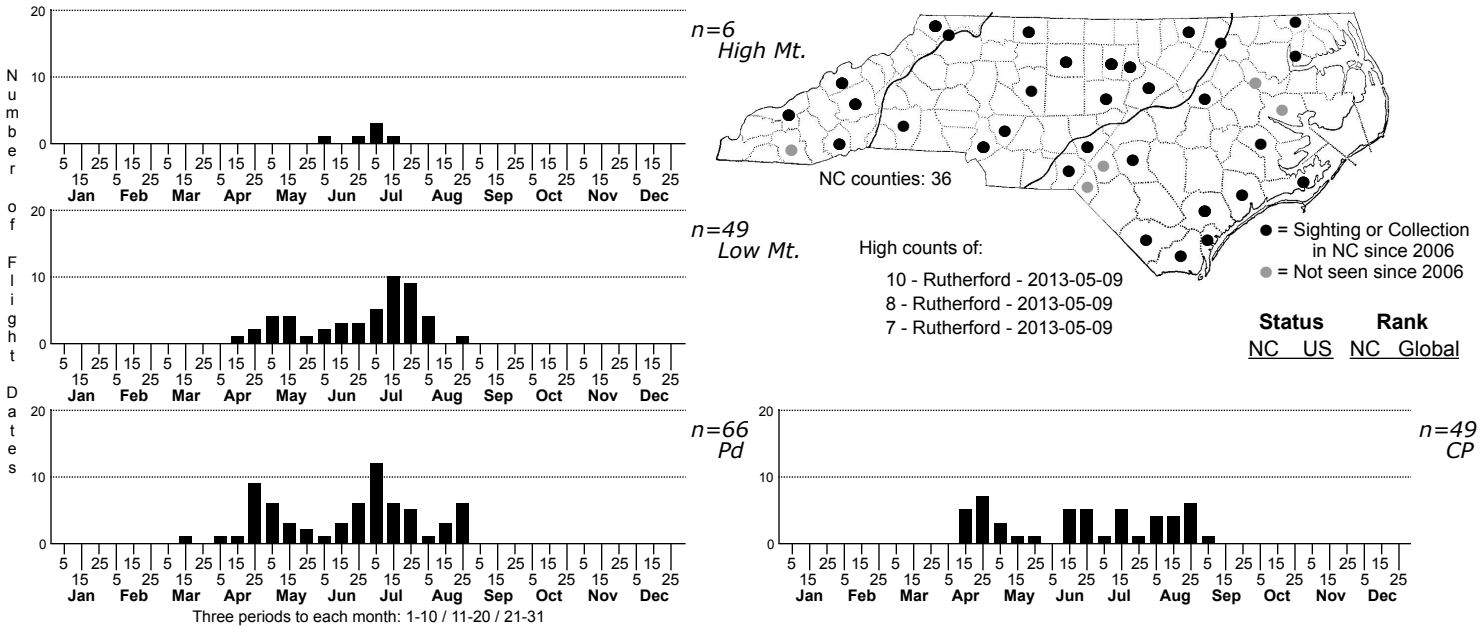
Acronicta retardata Retarded Dagger



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 retardata was included in the Modica Species Group (Group IV) by Forbes (1954) but has been placed in a separate, monotypic subgenus, Dossena, by Schmidt and Anweiler (2020), based on distinctive larval and male reproductive characters.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Wagner et al. (2011); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

ID COMMENTS: A small, gray Dagger with few distinctive markings. The ground color is light to medium gray and lacks the greenish, brownish, or reddish shadings found in the increta group, which otherwise look similar (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020). A small, blackish triangular spot located at the junction between the basal dash and antemedian line is the most distinctive marking.

DISTRIBUTION: Probably found statewide but with few records from the high mountains and none from the barrier islands

FLIGHT COMMENT: Possibly bivoltine, with peaks in the spring and late summer

HABITAT: Our records come mainly from wet-to-mesic hardwood forests.

FOOD: Larvae feed on a wide range of maples, including Red Maple (Acer rubrum), Silver Maple (A. saccharinum), Sugar Maple (A. saccharum), and Box-elder (A. negundo) (Wagner et al., 2011). In North Carolina, the species has been recorded feeding on Red Maple, Florida Maple (A. floridanum), and Box-elder.

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: This species is found throughout the state where it is associated with common host plants in habitats that are also still common. Consequently, it appears to be secure in North Carolina.