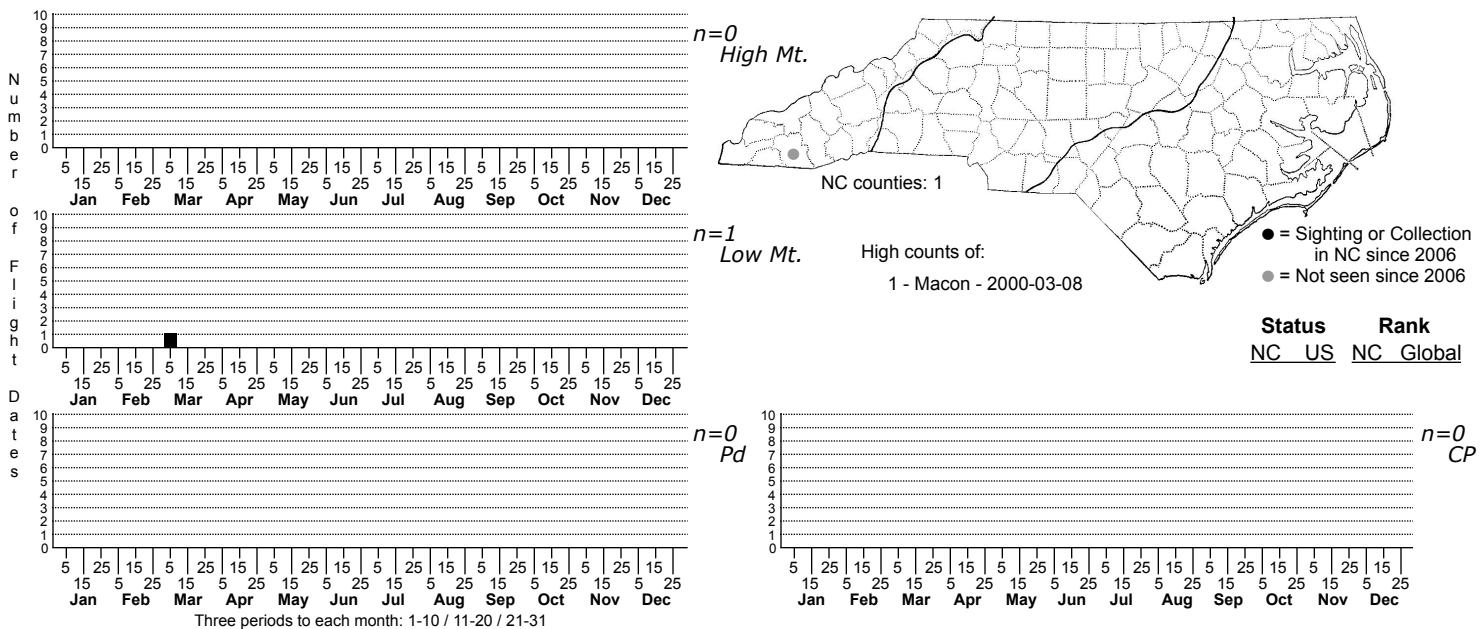


## *Acronicta dolli* Doll's Dagger



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 was previously placed in a separate genus, *Merolonche*, but was moved to *Acronicta* by Lafontaine and Schmidt (2010).

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Not in either field guide

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Schweitzer et al. (2011); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Schweitzer et al. (2011); Wagner et al. (2011); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized Noctuid with dark to medium gray forewings and whitish hindwings (Forbes, 1954; Schweitzer et al., 2011). The transverse lines are filled with white and outlined heavily with black; the postmedian is zig-zagged and the antemedian is scalloped. The reniform and orbicular spots are pale (Forbes, 1954) or connected by a pale patch (Schweitzer et al., 2011).

DISTRIBUTION: Restricted to the Mountains in North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, with an early spring flight period.

HABITAT: This species is associated with barrens habitat farther north. Our one record comes from a stand of pines and hardwoods located about 600 meters from an area of Low Elevation Acidic Glade habitat on a rocky summit.

FOOD: Larvae are polyphagous, feeding on a wide range of shrubs and trees; heaths and scrub oaks are commonly used in its typical barrens habitats. Wagner et al. (2011) specifically list oak (*Quercus*), ash (*Fraxinus*), and blueberry (*Vaccinium*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Schweitzer et al. (2011) report that adults of this species are difficult to collect. In contrast, larvae are apparently easily collected through beating shrubs and small trees; young larvae are also often conspicuous when they are at rest on the upper sides of leaves.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G3G4 S1

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

COMMENTS: This species is generally considered to be rare across its range, and our sole record for it, at the extreme southern end of its range, is consistent with that view. Schweitzer et al. (2011), however, believe it is more common than the records for adults indicate. Larval surveys are needed in order to determine its true abundance, distribution, and habitat affinities in North Carolina.