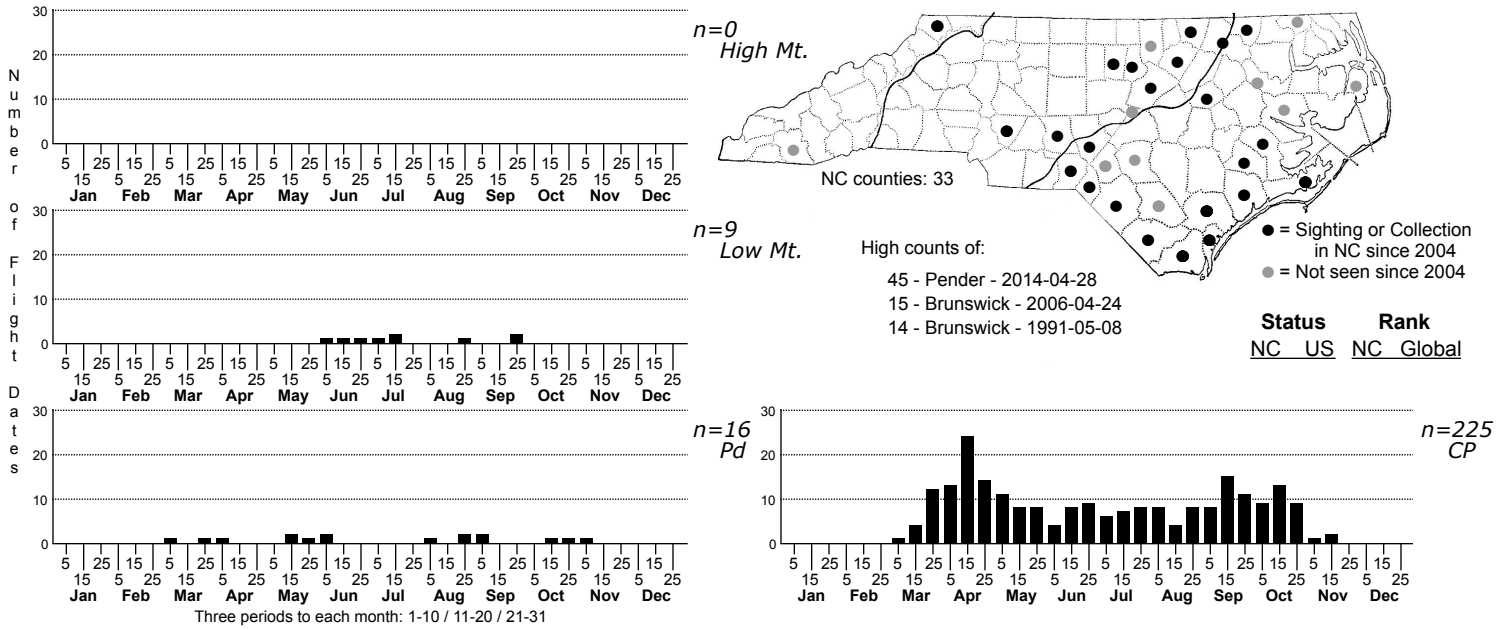
Iodopepla u-album White-eyed Borer



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Actinotiini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: A New World genus with one species in Cuba and one in eastern North America, including North Carolina. Long regarded as an isolated genus, we now know that the North American species is quite closely related to the genus Nedra based on barcodes, genitalia and life histories.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954), as Oligia? u-album
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: This is a medium-sized Noctuid with a dark purplish- or vinaceous ground color, dusted with gray. The u-shaped reniform has a contrasting white partial outline filled with the ground color and also somewhat dusted with paler scales, particularly towards the inner margin. The antemedian and postmedian lines are dark purplish and uneven; often only the lower portions near the inner margin are distinct. The subterminal is diffuse, marked mainly with the paler gray scales on the inner side and darker purple on the outer side. The hindwings are fuscous.

DISTRIBUTION: This species is far more common in the eastern half of the state but is regularly taken in the mountains up to about 3500’.

FLIGHT COMMENT: In the Coastal Plain, there appear to be three distinct broods, beginning early in the spring.

HABITAT: The vast majority of our records come from Longleaf Pine habitats, including wet savannas, mesic flatwoods, and xeric sandhills. However, we also have records from peatlands, river floodplains, lakeshores, mafic glades, and dry upland slopes.

FOOD: Stenophagous, feeding on various species of St. Johnswort (Hypericum sp.). Nedra caterpillars also feed on species of St. Johns Wort (Hypericum sp.) and once it was realized that the genitalia of Iodopepla and Nedra were similar, eggs were obtained from a gravid female of Iodopepla in North Carolina and offered Hypericum cuttings which they readily consumed. Any specificity for a particular Hypericum species is unknown as caterpillars have not been found in the wild.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults are attracted to light and caterpillars seem to remain on the foodplant and so should be found by beating. Nedra is said to come to bait but we have not seen similar behavior in Iodopepla.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: [G5 S4]

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

COMMENTS: Iodopepla appears to be less widely distributed than Nedra ramosula, but appears to be far more common within at least certain habitats, particularly Longleaf Pine-dominated communities. Given its use of a fairly wide range of habitats, it is probably secure within the state.