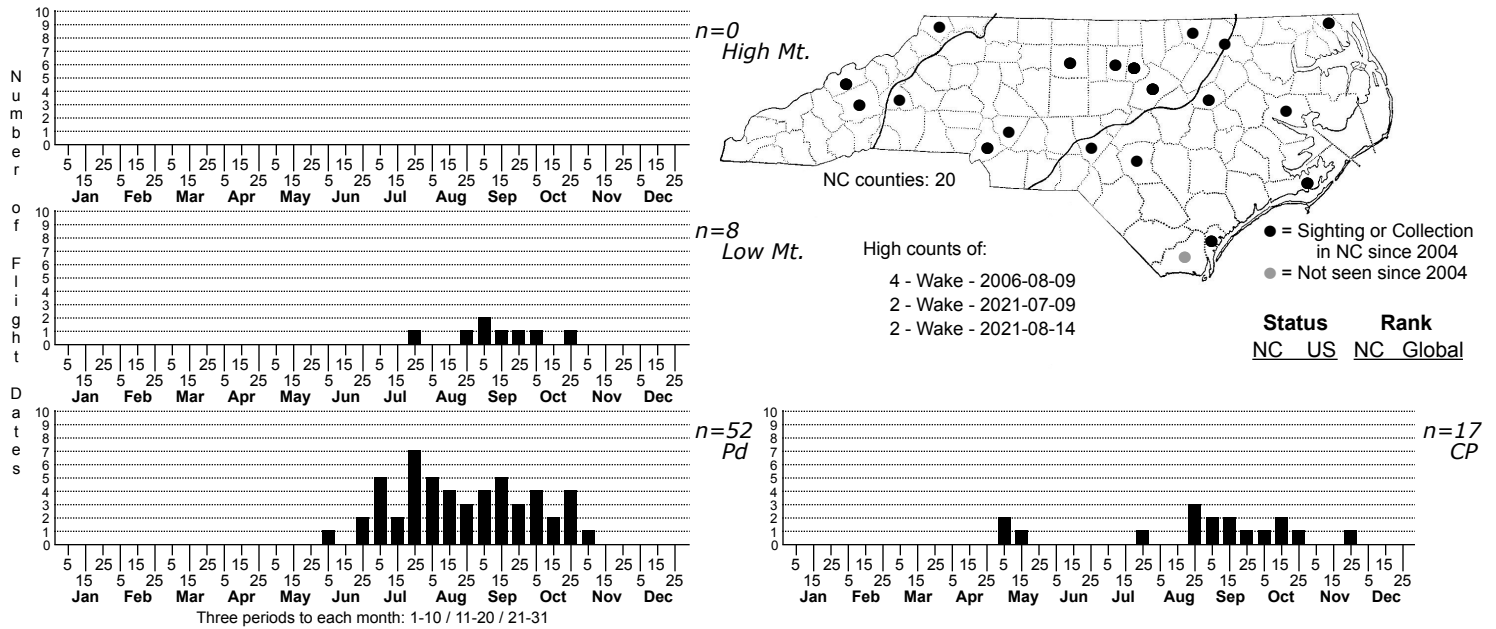


Calloplistria floridensis Florida Fern Moth



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Eriopinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: This is a very large genus found worldwide. We have 5 species in the US and Canada of which 4 occur in North Carolina. The genus contains reddish species which feed on ferns and is likely polyphyletic, including our 4 species.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1954)

ID COMMENTS: The pattern and color of the forewings are striking and unique among our moth species. The ground color is pinkish- to olive-brown. A dark brown basal dash is present and a triangular or trapezoidal wedge of dark brown located at the middle of the costa is the most conspicuous mark; a subterminal dark patch may also be present. A pale, pinkish or silvery band extends obliquely from the inner margin to the costa, bordering the median basal patch on its outer side. This line then bends around sinuously, merging with the postmedian. Other pale lines border the other dark spots and a pale adterminal line may also be present.

DISTRIBUTION: As a migrant this species has been taken almost exclusively in eastern North Carolina but it should occur throughout the state as well.

FLIGHT COMMENT: There appear to be multiple broods and the species likely breeds continuously throughout the growing season. Because there are records in the spring, it may overwinter at times but it seems to mostly migrate to our area.

HABITAT: North Carolina records come primarily from barrier island and Longleaf Pine habitats; in the Piedmont, records come mainly from wooded habitats located next to large man-made lakes. We have no idea, however, if any of these sites contain breeding habitat for this species, supporting residential populations.

FOOD: Larvae feed on commercially grown ferns and perhaps native species, although we are unaware of records for the latter. Our only larval record is from an ornamental Boston Fern (<i>Nephrolepis exaltata</i>).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Attracted to lights but we have no records of it coming to bait or to flowers. If you have a Boston Fern (from a nursery or grocery store) hanging on your porch, look for telltale frass below the plant in the summer and early fall.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: [GNR SU]

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

COMMENTS: This species may be primarily a migratory stray in our area, although some may establish at least short term colonies associated with greenhouses. More work needs to be done to determine if there are any residential populations in the state, and what host plants and habitats are used at those sites.