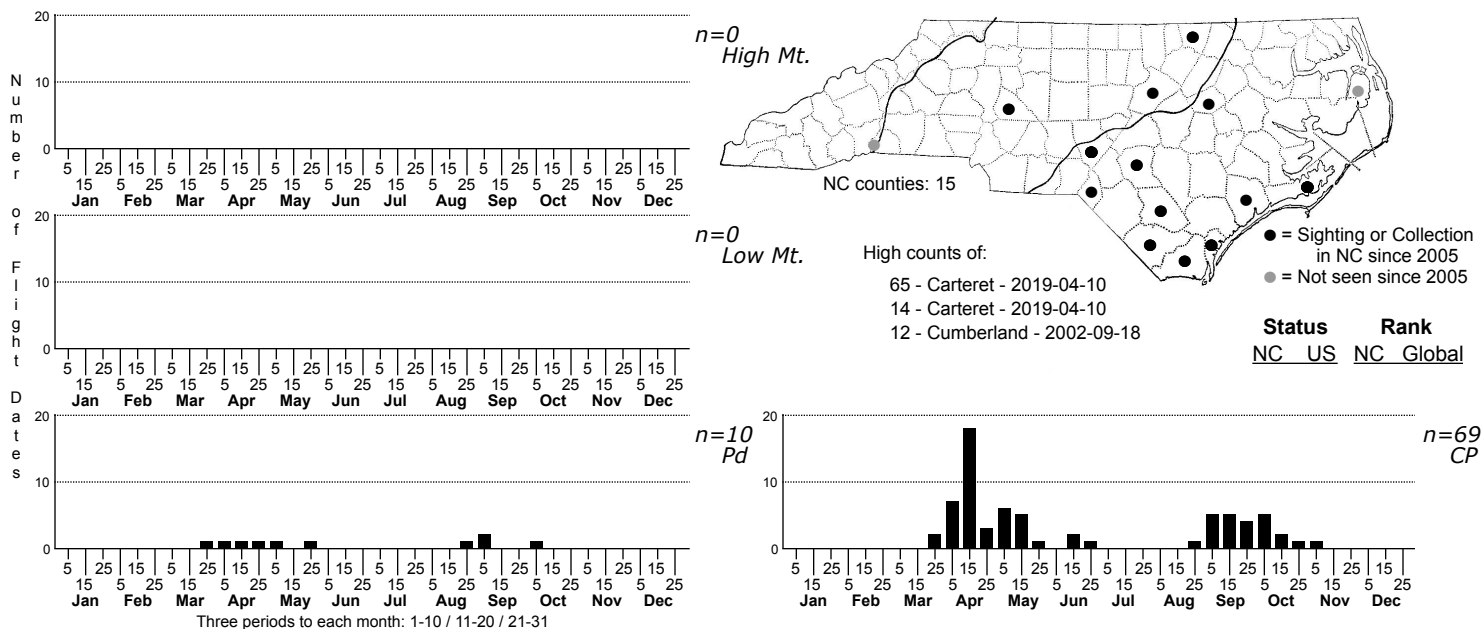


Elaphria festivoides Festive Midget



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Elaphriini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of fourteen species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010), nine of which have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Pogue and Sullivan (2003)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This is a spring and fall-flying species that occurs almost solely in the Coastal Plain, favoring xeric sandhill habitats. Its forewings are drabber in color than the other two members of this complex, lacking the rufous and white scales typical of *alipallida*. The hindwings, however, are gray rather than the light brown of *cornutinis* or the whitish in *alipallida* (Saluke and Pogue, 2000; Pogue and Sullivan, 2003). The overall pattern of forewing marking is similar in all three species of this complex. The markings, however, are less distinct in *festivoides*. In particular, the claviform spot is less conspicuous or even absent in *festivoides* but is usually well-developed in *alipallida* and *cornutinis*.

DISTRIBUTION: In North Carolina, this species has been recorded primarily in the Coastal Plain. Pogue and Sullivan (2003), however, show two historic records from Tryon, located in the Piedmont at the edge of the Blue Ridge escarpment.

FLIGHT COMMENT: This species is bivoltine, with a spring and late summer/fall flight periods. In North Carolina, the first brood of adults is present from late March to mid-May and the second from mid-September to mid-October (Pogue and Sullivan, 2003).

HABITAT: Habitats include xeric, sandy areas along the coast and inland to the Fall-line Sandhills (Pogue and Sullivan, 2003). This contrasts with the association of *alipallida* with hardwood habitats.

FOOD: Hosts are poorly documented. Wagner et al. (2011) list Box-elder (*Acer negundo*), but that seems highly unlikely to be used in North Carolina, given the association of this species with xeric habitats rather than the floodplains occupied by Box-elder. Pogue and Sullivan (2003) also discount its use by the other species in this complex.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: This species comes to blacklights fairly well.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S3S4]

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

COMMENTS: The range, host plants, and habitats of this species need clarification due to its long confusion with other members of the *Festivoides* Complex, which occupy a very different set of habitats. In North Carolina, this species appears to be a specialist on xeric, sandy habitats.