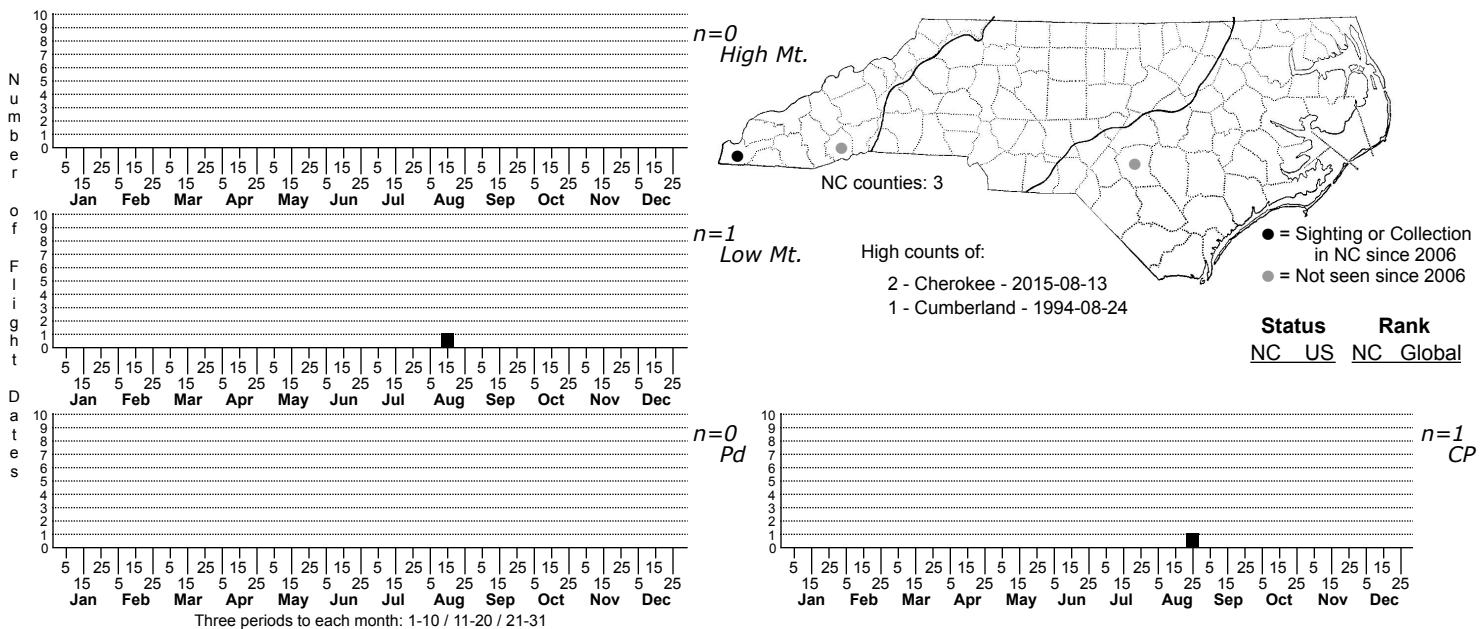


Stiria rugifrons Yellow Sunflower Moth



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Amphipyrinae TRIBE: Stiriini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of seven species in this genus that occur in North America north of Mexico (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010), and the only one that has been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954); Poole (1995)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Poole (1995); Wagner et al. 2011

ID COMMENTS: A medium-sized, contrastingly marked yellow and brown Noctuid. The top of the head and most of the forewings are ochre to bright yellow, strongly contrasting with the brown thorax and spots at the base of the forewing, a saddle at the midpoint of the inner margin, and the terminal area. Hindwings are whitish (Forbes, 1954). Other species of *Stiria* are very similar but do not occur in the East. *Azena obtusa* has similar contrasting yellow and brown markings but is much smaller and has two brown spots along the costal margin and one in the cell; the brown band along the terminal area is missing.

DISTRIBUTION: Most of our records come from the southern Mountains, but we also have one from the Fall-line Sandhills

FLIGHT COMMENT: Our few records come from August

HABITAT: Records from Cherokee County come from a wildflower-rich powerline. The record from the Sandhills comes from a dry Longleaf Pine dominated habitat where yellow composites were common.

FOOD: Larvae are stenophagous, feeding on sunflowers (<i>Helianthus</i> spp.), including Small Wood Sunflower (<i>H. microcephalus</i>) (Poole, 1995; Wagner et al., 2011)

OBSERVATION METHODS: Adults come to lights to some extent and probably rest on flowers during the day. Larvae can be located by looking for flower heads that show accumulations of flower remains below the feeding site (Wagner et al., 2011)

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G4 SU

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

COMMENTS: This species is considered rare and local east of the Appalachians (Forbes, 1954; Poole, 1995; Wagner et al., 2011). The fact that it feeds on a fairly common genus of host plants, however, together with its widely separated records, suggests that it may occur over a broad area the state. More surveys -- particularly of larvae -- are needed to determine its actual conservation status in the state.