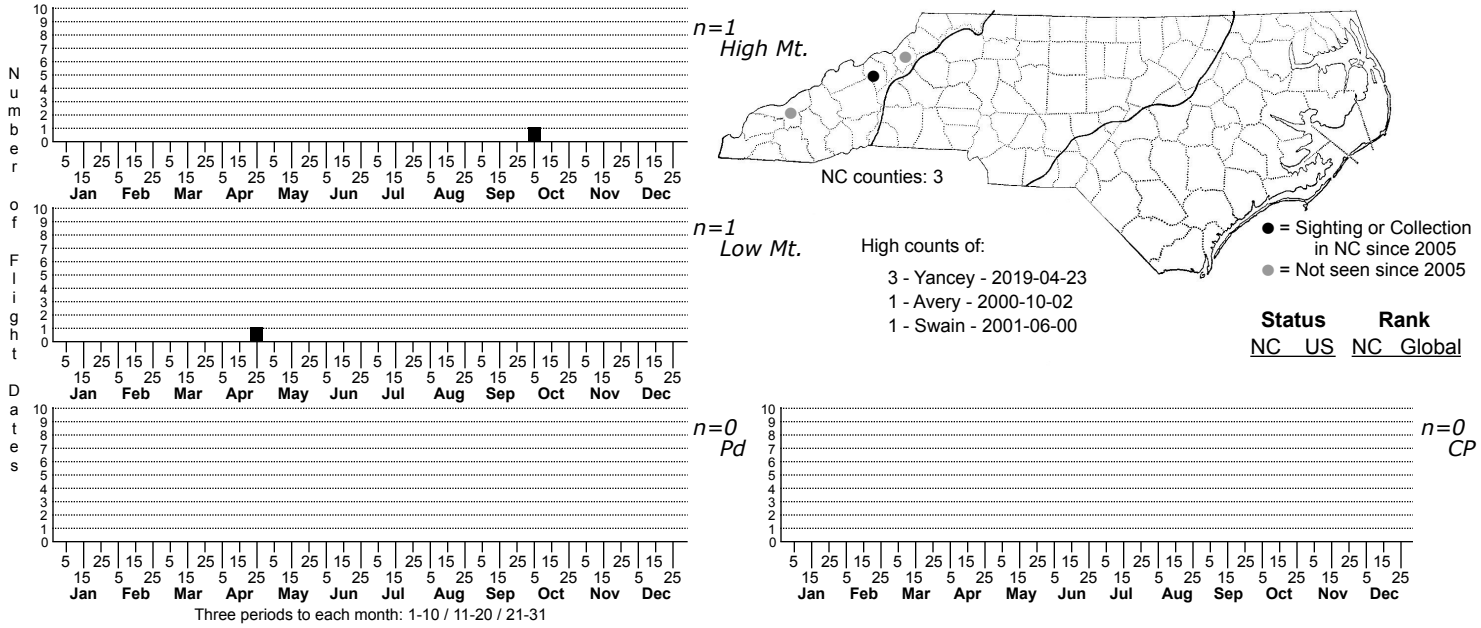
Lithophane georgii Large Gray Pinion



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Xylenini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: One of 51 species in this genus that occur in North America (Lafontaine and Schmidt, 2010, 2015), 25 of which have been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1954); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: A medium-large Pinion. The ground color of the forewings is a pale, slightly bluish gray, and contrasting with the fuscous veins. A long thin black basal dash is present but both the antemedian and postmedian lines are obsolete. The subterminal is conspicuous, however, and consists of a series of dark wedges located between the veins. Both the orbicular and reniform are pale gray with a lighter ring, outwardly edged with black. The hindwings are fuscous brown (Forbes, 1954).

DISTRIBUTION: Restricted to high elevations in the Mountains, with records coming from sites above 5,250 ft (1600 m) (Wagner et al., 2011).

FLIGHT COMMENT: Univoltine, with adults recorded beginning in early October and overwintering to the following spring

HABITAT: Our few records all come from Northern Hardwoods.

FOOD: Larvae are polyphagous, feeding on many hardwood trees and shrubs. In North Carolina, Wagner et al. (2011) list the following as food plants: blueberry (Vaccinium), blackberry (Rubus), currant (Ribes), and Pin Cherry (Prunus pensylvanica).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Like most species in the genus, L. georgii probably comes better to bait than to lights. Larvae can be found by beating woody broad-leafed plants, sometimes in abundance (Wagner et al., 2011).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 S1S2

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation, however, does not confer any legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: The population of this species in the Southern Appalachians is strongly disjunct from its main range in Canada and the western Mountains; the next nearest populations appear to be located in northern New York and Pennsylvania (Forbes, 1954; Wagner et al., 2011). We have only a few records for adults, although Wagner reports finding larvae in abundance at one site in Swain County. As with other disjunct species associated with high elevation habitats in the Southern Appalachians, this species is probably a Pleistocene relict and its range in our mountains. As a cold climate species, it is likely to be strongly reduced due to the effects of climate change. Once gone, this species will probably never return to this state, short of another period of glaciation.