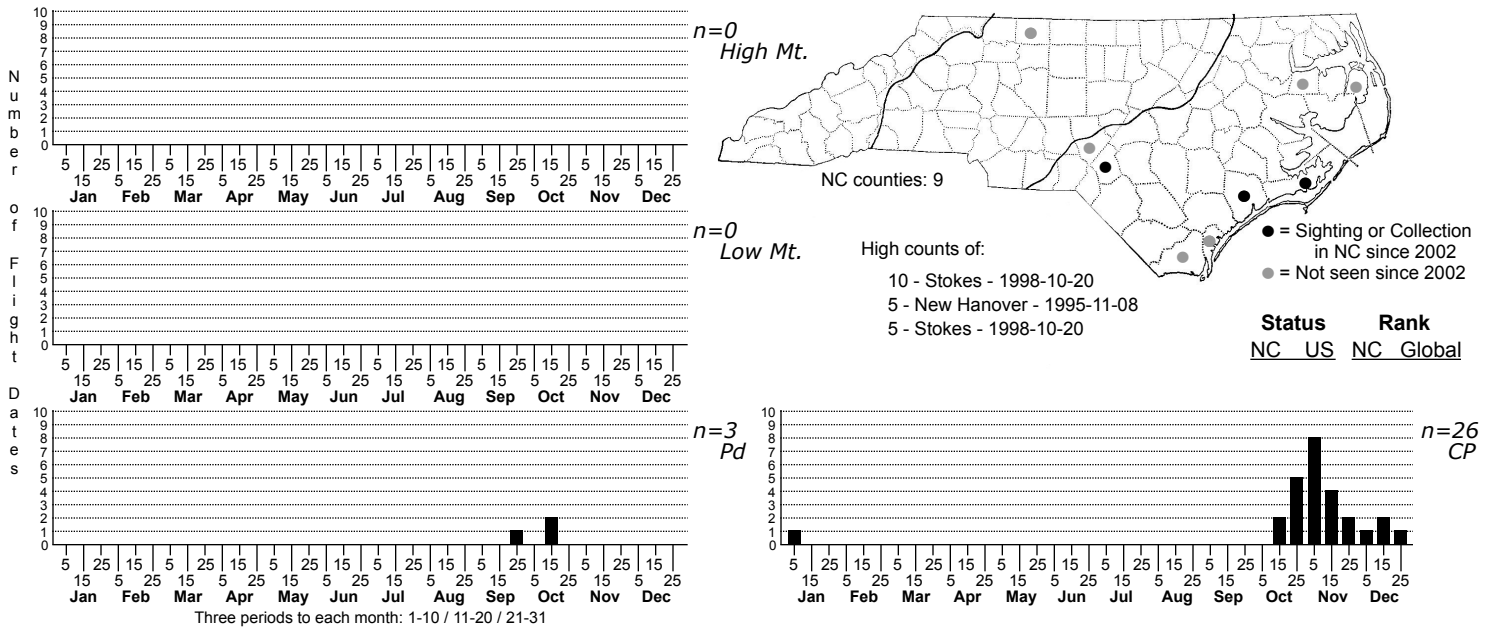


Chaetagnela rhonda Eastern Trembling Sallow



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Xylenini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: Currently this genus of 5 species is wholly North American and three of the species are found in North Carolina. The genus is quite similar to other "glaeas" and distinguished largely by features of the male valve and aedeagus.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Not in either field guide (Covell, 1984, describes tremula but does not illustrate it)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Stead and Troubridge (2015)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Wagner et al. (2011 -- the description given for tremula is based at least partly on specimens that actually represent rhonda)

ID COMMENTS: The species is best recognized by its large size and lack of distinct patterning. It comes in a variety of color forms, reddish and gray being the most common. The cross lines are visible but the patterning around the orbicular and reniform spots is very weak. The spot in the reniform is usually visible, however, and contrastingly dark. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Most of our records come from the Coastal Plain but it extends across the Piedmont to the foothills of the mountains. It may be restricted to dry barren areas in the Piedmont.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Flies from late September into December

HABITAT: In the Coastal Plain, our records come mainly from maritime dunes and Coastal Sandhill Scrub habitats, which is consistent with the coastal and lakeshore dune habitats described for this species by Stead and Troubridge (2015). We also have one record from an extensive area of peatlands and in the Piedmont, we have records from acidic upland forests on the slopes of a monadnock. Except for the peatland record, these habitats are a good match to the habitats described by Wagner et al. (2011) for tremula (= rhonda) in the Northeast. The presence of heaths, or perhaps other acidic shrubs, appears to be a common denominator.

FOOD: There are only a few records of larvae found in the wild, where they were observed feeding on Gaylussacia baccata and Vaccinium angustifolium. Captive larvae have been reared on a wider range of species, including oaks and sweet fern (Wagner et al, 2011).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Adults come to lights and bait but with so few fall flowers in late October and November, it is unlikely they visit them.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S2S4

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

COMMENTS: We have relatively few records for this species and more surveys need to be conducted during its fall flight period to better determine its distribution, abundance, host plants, and habitat associations. Once those data are available, a more accurate diagnosis can be made of its conservation status.