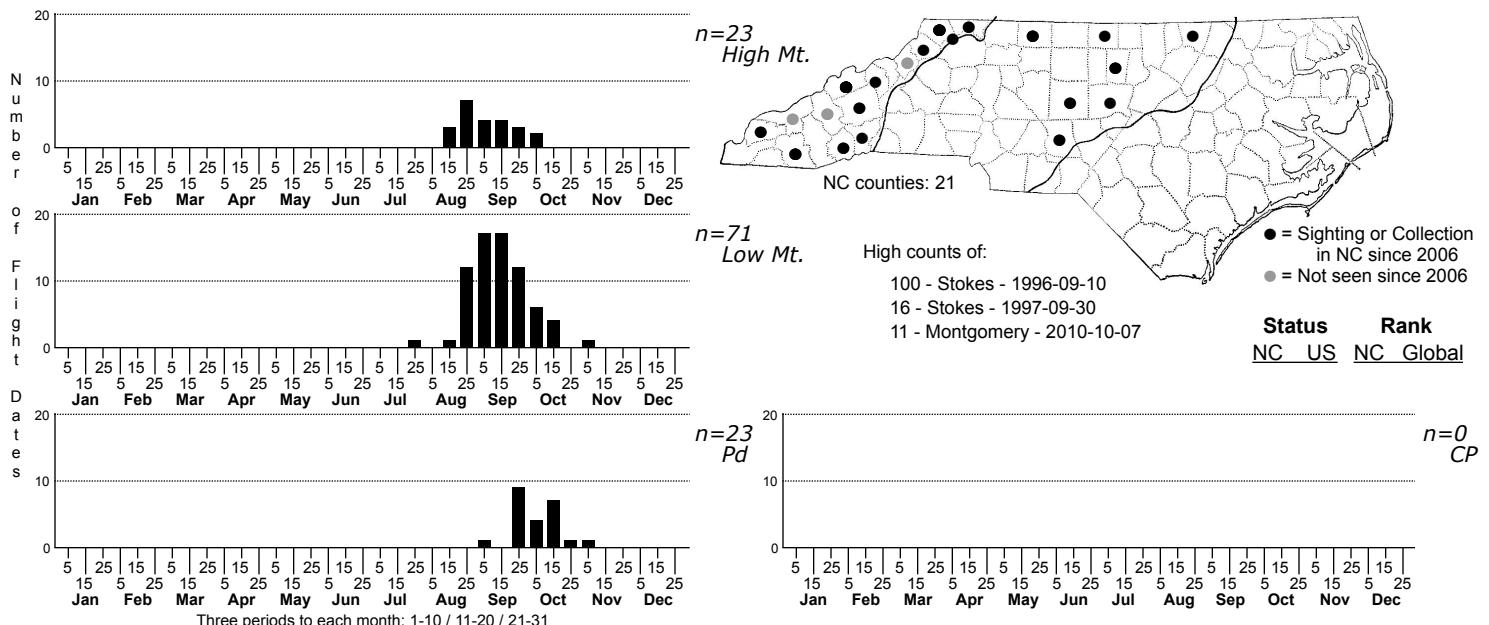


Anathix ralla Dotted Sallow



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Noctuinae TRIBE: Xylenini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: A genus of three North American species of which one has been recorded in North Carolina.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: This yellow-orange species is not likely to be confused with any species other than *Sunira bicolorago*. Their flight periods are different: *Anathix* preceeds *Sunira* but there is a week or two overlap in many areas. Look at the course of the postmedian line, which is smoothly arched in *Anathix* but has a median offset in *Sunira*. *Anathix puta*, a more northern species feeding on Aspen, has been taken as far south as West Virginia and should be sought for at high elevations where our aspen grow. It looks similar to *A. ralla* but is quite a bit darker from a brownish dusting.

DISTRIBUTION: Found in the Mountains and Piedmont but we have no records from the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Beginning in mid August, this species is frequently seen for about a month. At the end of the flight period it overlaps with *Sunira bicolorago*.

HABITAT: Most of our records come from upland forests, including from both dry and mesic slopes. A few also come from riparian and lakeshore habitats.

FOOD: Host plants are apparently unknown which is surprising given the wide distribution and frequency of occurrence. Captive females will probably lay eggs and could be offered a salad of foodplants known to harbor *Sunira* caterpillars. Larvae may also feed early in the fall and then hibernate before climbing into the canopy to complete development, thus explaining why none have been observed. Other species in this genus have been reported on aspens and poplars (*Populus* spp.). However, the distribution of *A. ralla*, in our state at least, does not correspond to concentrations of *Populus* and some other host plant is likely to be used.

OBSERVATION METHODS: Known to respond well to lights but response to bait is unknown.

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: While it does not appear to be threatened, until the host plants and habitat associations of this species are clarified, the conservation status of *Anathix ralla* cannot be accurately determined.