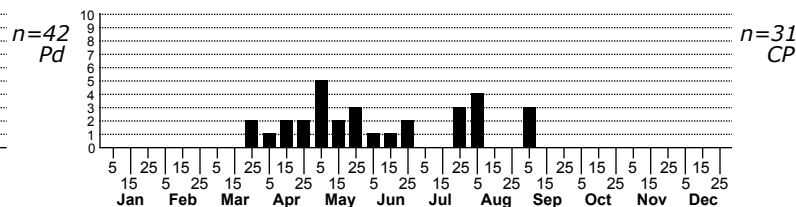
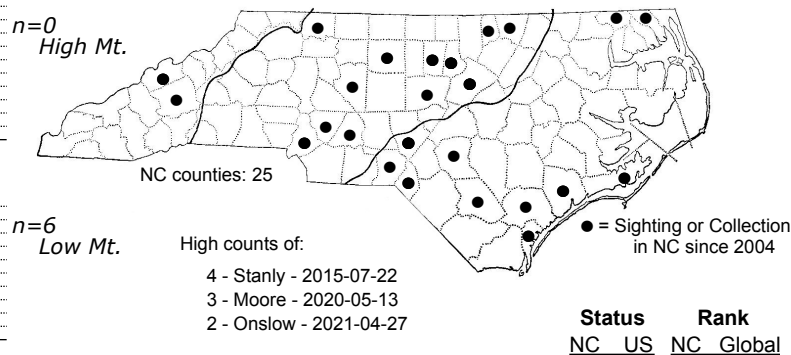
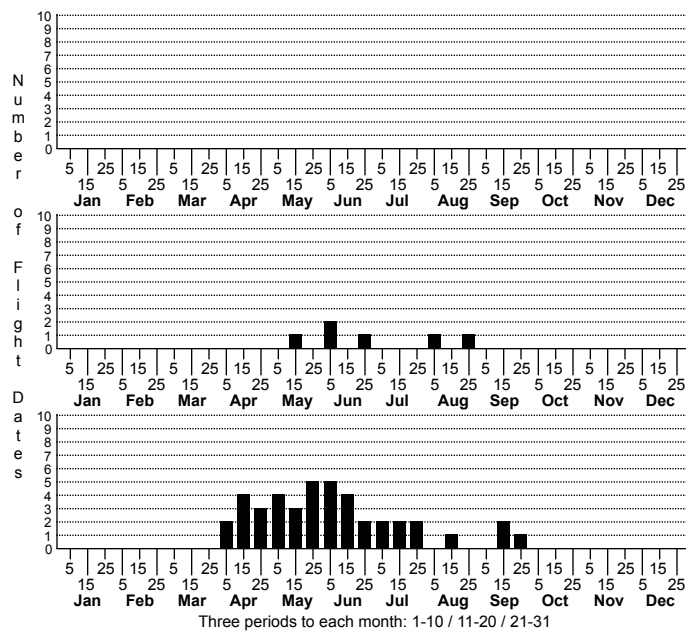


## *Battaristis vittella* Orange Stripe-backed Moth



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Gelechiinae TRIBE: Anacampsiini

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: The genus *Battaristis* contains 31 described species that are mostly found in the New World. Most species are found in South America, and only five are currently recognized in North America.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012); Leckie and Beadle (2018)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Busck (1916)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Franklin and Coulson (1968)

ID COMMENTS: This is a small and distinctively marked moth with alternating regions of silvery gray and orangish brown patterning. The following description is based in part on that of Busck (1916). The antenna is silvery gray with darker annulations. The second joint of the labial palp is blackish brown exteriorly and light ochraceous fuscous on the inner side, with the edge of the apex white. The terminal joint is whitish with a broad black annulation before the apex. The face is whitish, and the upper head, thorax and much of the forewing is covered with light steel gray to grayish-white scales. The silvery gray regions of the forewing are overlain with four reddish-brown to orangish-brown marks. These include a relatively small and somewhat crescent-shaped mark at one-fourth the wing length, a broad band that extends across the entire wing at one-half, a similar broad band at about three-fourths, and a more diffuse, rounded costal patch just beyond the last band. The two broad bands have rows of whitish scales on their posterior margins that produce an overall pattern of alternating whitish and orangish-brown banding along the wing. In addition to these markings, the basal half of the costal edge is dark brown and there is a small black dash on the middle of the termen. The cilia are steel-gray with a thin black marginal line that is white edged posteriorly. The hindwing is dark fuscous, and the abdomen is blackish fuscous above. The legs are blackish brown with narrow white annulations on the tarsal joints.

DISTRIBUTION: *Battaristis vittella* is found in eastern North America from Maine and adjoining areas of extreme southern Canada southward to southern Florida and westward to eastern Texas, central Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa and Wisconsin. It appears to occur statewide, where it is common in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, and uncommon at lower elevations in the mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been found from February through October in areas outside of North Carolina, with a seasonal peak in June and July. As of 2021, our records are from late March through mid-September, with little evidence of a strong seasonal peak in North Carolina.

HABITAT: Local populations are strongly dependent on yellow pines for reproduction and can be found in pine or mixed pine-hardwood communities statewide. Many of our native pines are early to mid-successional species that often become established in abandoned fields or after clearcutting. They also occur on drier slopes and forests and become established after fires when hardwoods are killed.

FOOD: This species feeds on the cones of yellow pines (Craighead et al., 1950; Ebel, 1963; Franklin and Coulson, 1968; Baker, 1972; Heppner, 2007; Robinson et al., 2010). The documented hosts include Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*), Slash Pine (*P. elliotii*), Austrian Pine (*P. nigra*), Longleaf Pine (*P. palustris*), Red Pine (*P. resinosa*), Loblolly Pine (*P. taeda*) and Virginia Pine (*P. virginiana*).

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and the larvae can be found by breaking apart second year cones of pines.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR S4S5

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

COMMENTS: This species is widespread and rather common across the state. It appears to be secure considering how widespread and abundant yellow pines are in the state.