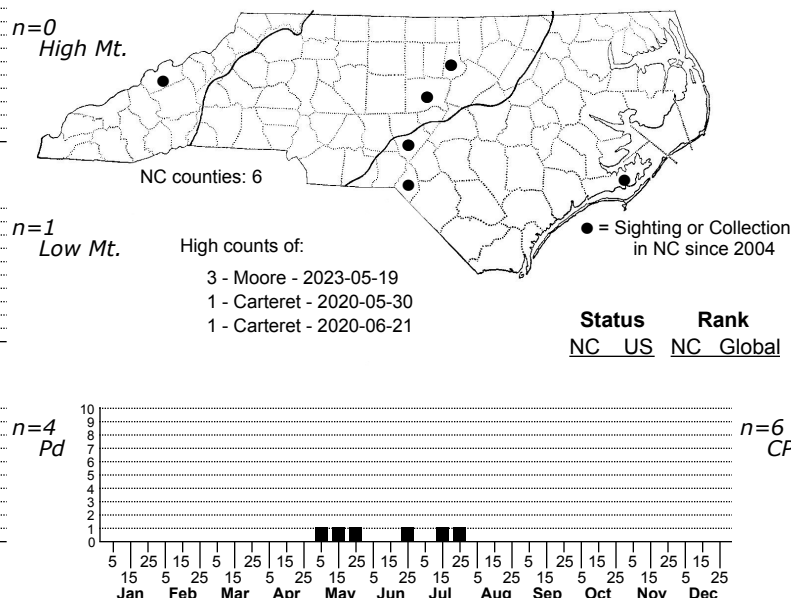
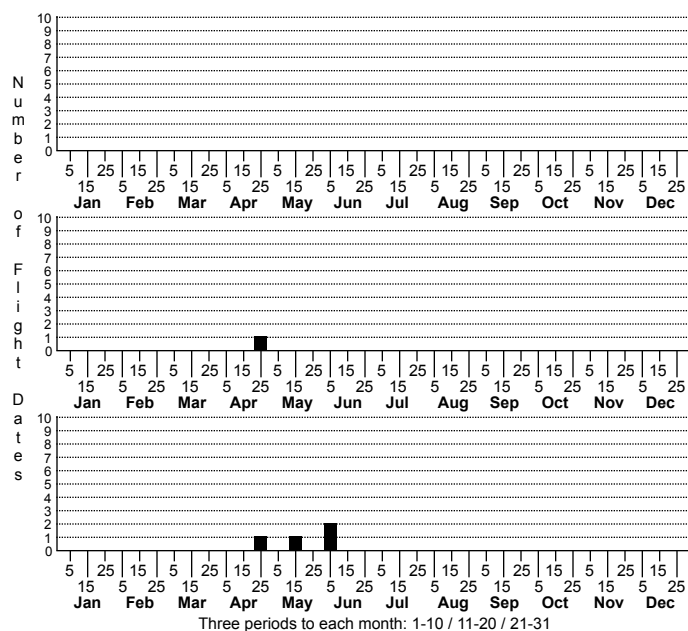


Epiblema minutana No common name



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Eucosmini

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: In their monograph and revision of *Epiblema*, Wright and Gilligan (2023) placed *E. minutana* in the *E. strenuana* group and noted that most of the taxonomic history of this group has centered around whether this species and a closely related form, *E. strenuana*, are distinct species or not. Various authors have treated them as being both conspecific and heterospecific since the early 1900's. In the most recent study Gilligan et al. (2020a) treated them as separate species based on barcoding, wing coloration, and the shape of the female sterigma.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Wright and Gilligan (2023).

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Epiblema minutana* is a primarily brownish-gray to dark gray moth. The interfascial spot near the middle of the inner margin is often absent, but when expressed is pale gray. The ocellus is prominent and has a whitish central field that is flanked laterally by grayish transverse bands and bisected by a longitudinal, slightly curved black dash. The white costal strigulae are usually well expressed and there are no orangish-brown lines between the striae in the subcostal area near the apex (Gilligan et al., 2020a). This species is most easily confused with *E. strenuana*, which is brown, with most of the costal strigulae being inconspicuous. In addition, the associated gray striae of the latter extend toward the termen and are usually separated by lines of orangish-brown scales. *Epiblema minutana* also has a whitish face and palps versus a brownish face and palps in *E. strenuana*. Female genitalia are also useful in separating the two species. Forewing length overlaps substantially between the two species, although on average *E. strenuana* is slightly larger (mean FWL = 7.1 mm for *E. strenuana* versus 6.0 mm for *E. minutana*).

DISTRIBUTION: *Epiblema minutana* is found throughout most of the eastern U.S. where scattered populations have been found from southern Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont southward to southern Florida, and westward to Texas, eastern Oklahoma, eastern Nebraska, Minnesota and northeastern North Dakota. Isolated populations have also been found in southern California. As of 2024, most of our records are from the Coastal Plain, particularly the Sandhills, with a few other records from the eastern Piedmont and lower elevations in the Blue Ridge.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been found from January through August in Florida and mostly from April through September elsewhere, with a peak in August in many areas of the range. As of 2024, our records extend from late April through late-July.

HABITAT: Most of our records are from dry, open habitats, including coastal dunes and xeric Sandhills communities. We have far fewer records from more mesic habitats in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge.

FOOD: This species appears to specialize on ragweeds (Gilligan et al., 2020a; Wright and Gilligan, 2023; McClay, 1987). Eastern populations use Common Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*); Wright and Gilligan, 2023), while populations in the western U.S. have been documented using Beach Bur (*A. chamissonis*) and Perennial Ragweed (*A. psilostachya*). The latter species occurs in North Carolina in the Sandhills and could potentially serve as a host there. The adults have also been reared in Mexico from field-collected larvae that fed on Weakleaf Bur Ragweed (*A. confertiflora*; McClay, 1987). They also use Lacy Ragweed (*A. tenuifolia*) in Israel where this species and *E. minutana* both have been introduced (Gilligan et al., 2020a).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights and larvae can be found in the stems of ragweeds.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR [S3S4]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: This is a widespread species that is probably more common than our records suggest due to undercollecting and confusion with closely related species.