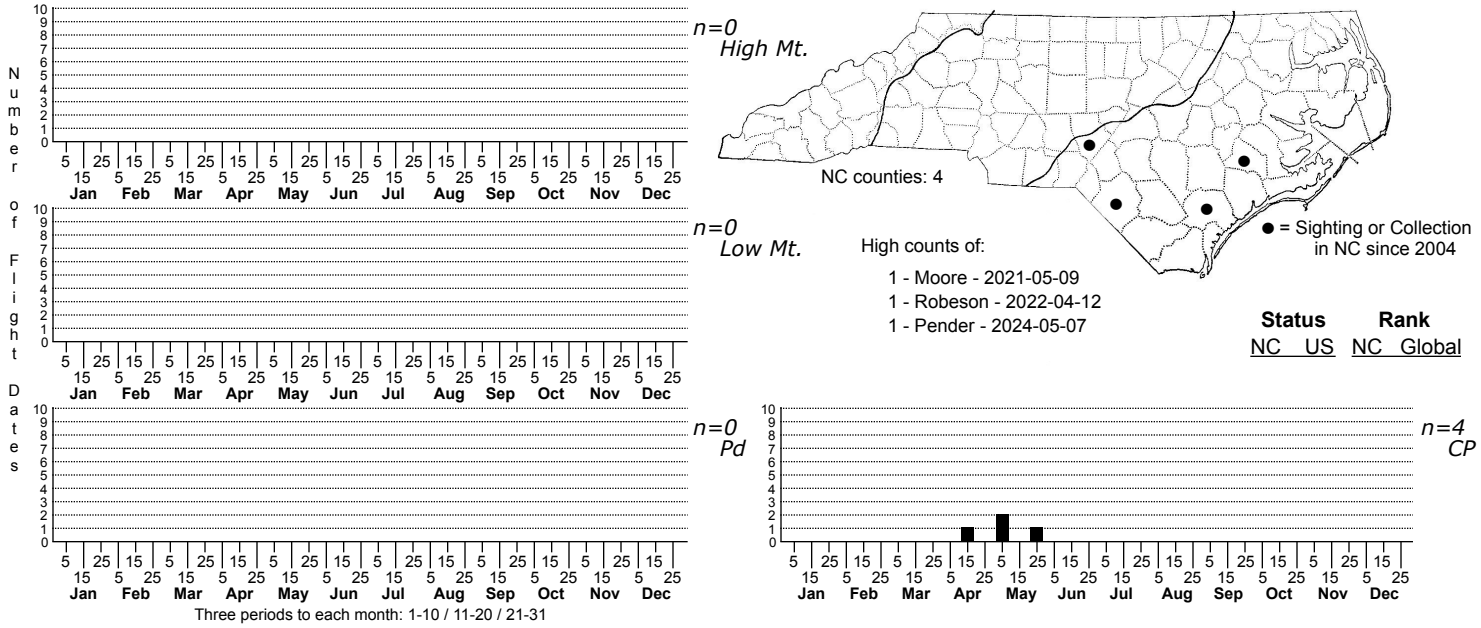
Epiblema tripartitana No common name



FAMILY: Tortricidae SUBFAMILY: Olethreutinae TRIBE: Eucosmini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: Epiblema tripartitana and E. glenni are two closely related species that Wright and Gilligan (2023) placed in the tripartitana species group. These species are sympatric through most of their ranges.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Beadle and Leckie (2012)
ONLINE PHOTOS:
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Wright (2002).
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Bottimer (1926)

ID COMMENTS: This species is predominantly brown with a broad whitish to pale pinkish-white median band that often has two or three dots of dark scales along the inner margin. The palps, head, thorax and antennae are all dark brown and concolorous with a prominent basal patch on the forewing. The dark brown basal patch contrast sharply with the lighter median band, which gradually narrows from the inner margin towards the costa. The distal edge of the band is more or less outwardly convex. In females the band is continuous from the inner margin to the costa, while in males it is intercepted by the costal fold, which extends to about two-thirds the wing length. Where the two meet, it contrast weakly with the pale gray costal strigulae (Wright, 2002; Wright and Gilligan, 2023). The median fascia that follows the median band is brownish to grayish and sometimes paler than the basal patch. It has several black spots in the pretornal region. The costal stigulae beyond the median band are white and well defined, while the ocellus is usually dark and obscure.

Epiblema tripartitana is very similar to E. glenni and is best distinguished by the color and shape of the median band. In E. tripartitana the band appears white to the naked eye, but a pale salmon tint usually is detectable under magnification (Wright, 2002). In females the band merges with the costal stigulae, forming a continuous band from the inner margin to the costa. In males the band is intercepted by the costal fold, but the light-gray to gray costal strigulae on the adjacent portion of the fold often create the impression of it continuing to the costal margin. The convex curvature of the band's distal margin varies from circular, to that of a line bent just above the fold. In E. glenni the median band is distinctly salmon colored, and often has a thin white margin where it adjoins the brown basal patch. Its width narrows markedly above the fold, where the distal edge angles abruptly inward. In females it continues forward to the costa as a narrower band, while in males it is separated from the costal fold by a narrow strip of dark scales (Wright, 2002). Wright (2002) was unable to find any diagnostic differences between species based on the male and female genitalia. These species appear to be geographically isolated in North Carolina, with E. glenni restricted to the Blue Ridge and E. tripartitana to the Coastal Plain.

DISTRIBUTION: Epiblema tripartitana is found throughout much of the eastern and central U.S. and in portions of southern Canada (Manitoba; Ontario; Quebec). In the U.S. the range extends from Maine to southern Florida and westward to Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Minnesota. As of 2024, all of our records are from the southern half of the Coastal Plain.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been observed from March through October in different areas of the range, with a seasonal peak in June and July in most northern populations. As of 2024, our very limited records are from mid-April through late-May.

HABITAT: Our very limited records include a xeric Sandhills site and two mesic bottomland sites.

FOOD: This species appears to use Rudbeckia species as primary hosts (Forbes, 1923; Heinrich, 1923; Bottimer, 1926; Kimball, 1965; Miller, 1987; Heppner, 2007), including Giant Coneflower (Rudbeckia maxima). Forbes (1923) reported Solidago as a host, but this needs additional verification.

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR[S2S3]

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

COMMENTS: Epiblema tripartitana appears to be rare or uncommon in North Carolina, but additional information is needed on its host use, distribution and abundance before we can accurately assess its conservation status.