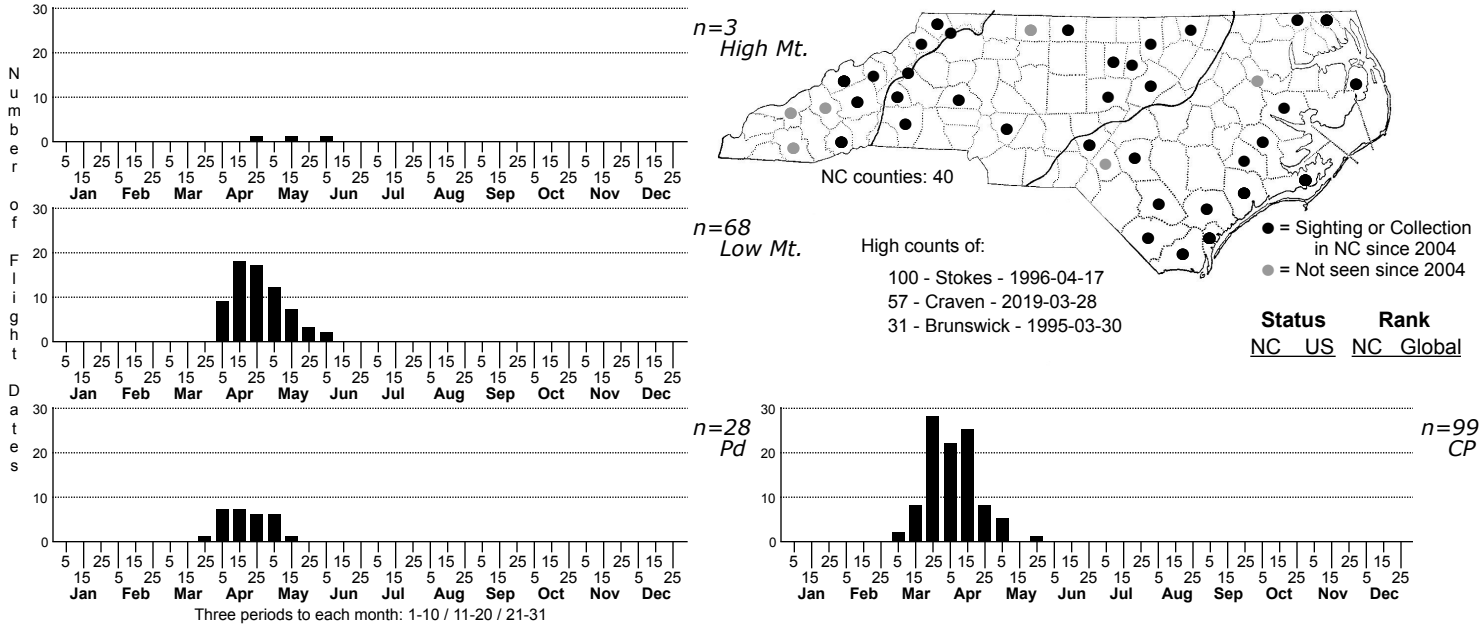
Deidamia inscriptum Lettered Sphinx



FAMILY: Sphingidae SUBFAMILY: Macroglossinae TRIBE: Macroglossini
TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: The only member of this genus.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)
ONLINE PHOTOS: MPG, Bugguide, BAMONA
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1948); Hodges (1971); Tuttle (2007)
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1948); Wagner (2005); Tuttle (2007)

ID COMMENTS: One of our smallest Sphinx moths. The forewings are distinctively cross-banded with pale gray or tan and darker brown and have a larger patch of dark brown near the outer margin. The hindwings are reddish or orange. Sexes are similar.

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs statewide, from the Barrier Islands to the High Mountains.

FLIGHT COMMENT: Single spring flight.

HABITAT: A number of records come from barrier islands, both from maritime forest and dunes, where grapes form thick tangles in places. Across the rest of the state, our records come primarily from hardwood-dominated forests, ranging from floodplain forests to cove forests to dry ridges.

FOOD: Oligophagous, feeding on Sourwood (Ericaceae) and Vitaceae. Larvae have been known to denude Sourwoods at moderate elevations in the mountains (Wagner, 2005).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: Adults visit flowers but have not been recorded at bait. They come well to 15 watt UV lights, regularly observed in suitable habitat, often as multiple individuals.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 [S5]

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

COMMENTS: Clearly populations fluctuate from year to year but the size of such outbreaks has not been recorded nor has their frequency in any one locality been noted. Tachinid fly populations may regulate the numbers from year to year. Given its wide distribution across the state, broad range of habitats and use of common host plants, this species appears to be secure.