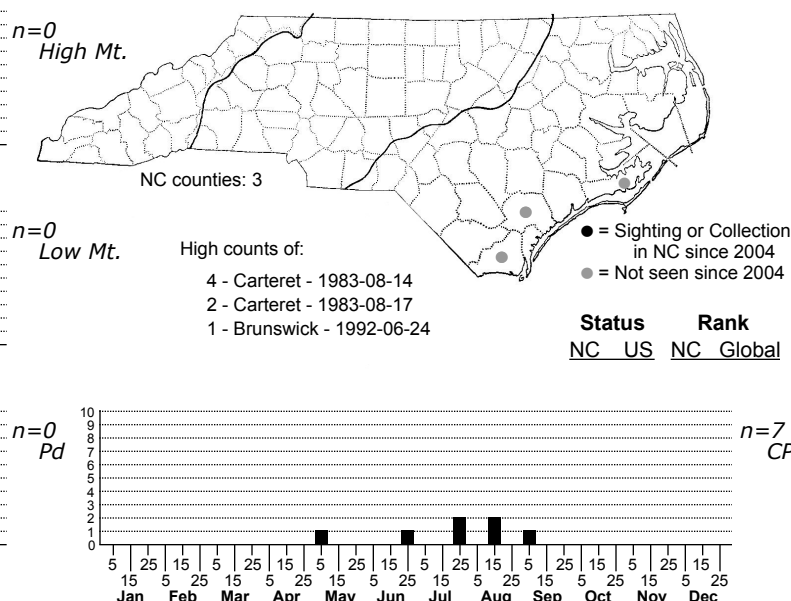
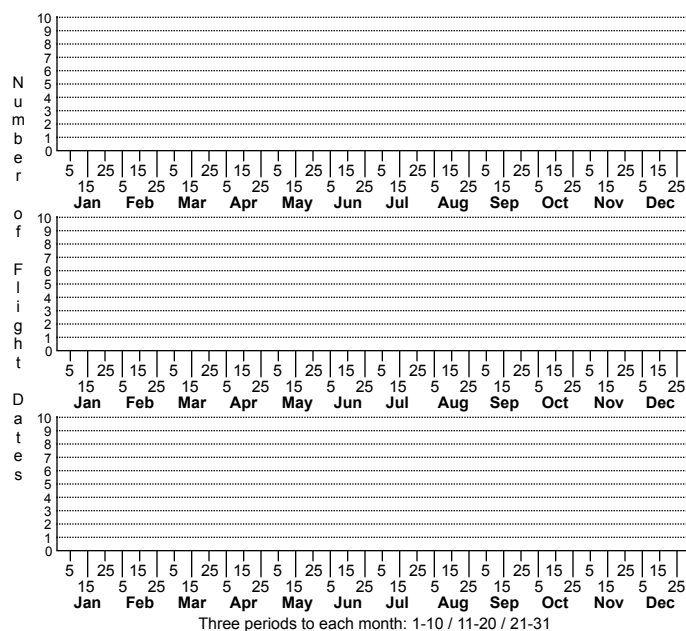


# *Acronicta sinescrypta* No common name



FAMILY: Noctuidae SUBFAMILY: Acronictinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC\_COMMENTS: One of 74 species in this genus found in North America north of Mexico (Schmidt and Anweiler, 2020), 42 of which have been recorded in North Carolina. *Acronicta sinescrypta* is a member of Species Group V of Forbes (1954), which in North Carolina also includes *A. impleta*, *A. noctivaga*, *A. impressa*, *A. longa*, *A. obliquata*, and *A. lanceolaria*.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Not in either field guide

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Ferguson (1988); Schweitzer et al. (2011); Schmidt and Anweiler (2020)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: A medium sized, pale gray *Acronicta*. *A. sinescrypta* is similar to both *A. obliquata* and *A. lanceolaria* in possessing narrow forewings with little or no transverse lines, and whitish hindwings. However, it has a less pointed apex on the forewing than both of those species, particularly *A. lanceolaria* (Ferguson, 1988). It also possess a long basal dash and a fine dark horizontal streak running through the end of the cell but broken where the reniform spot would be located (usually not visible in *A. sinescrypta*). Other dark streaks may be located in the subterminal area, but it lacks the dotted postmedian and series of terminal dark spots found in *A. obliquata* (Ferguson, 1988).

DISTRIBUTION: Appears to be restricted to the Outer Coastal Plain, from Carteret County southward.

FLIGHT COMMENT: We have records from May to September but there are too few to detect any pattern of flight periods.

HABITAT: Our records all come from Longleaf Pine Savannas. In Florida and Louisiana, records come from Pitcher Plant bogs, which are likely to have a similar composition of herbaceous plants to our coastal savannas, which also possess populations of Pitcher Plants.

FOOD: Host plants are apparently unknown (Ferguson, 1988). Schweitzer et al. (2011), erroneously state that Ferguson had reported the host plant as possibly *Froelichia arizonica*, but that record, along with another unidentified succulent herb, both refer to plants fed upon by the larvae of *Acronicta kendallorum*, which was described in the same paper by Ferguson. The two other members of this group, *A. obliquata* and *A. lanceolaria*, feed on a variety of herbs and shrubs, respectively, which does not help narrow down the likely hosts used by *A. sinescrypta*.

OBSERVATION\_METHODS: All of our records come from blacklight traps, but Schweitzer et al. (2011) suggest that it is very difficult to trap except possibly where mercury vapor is used. They were also unaware that any records have been obtained through use of bait. As in the case of *Acronicta lanceolaria*, it may turn out that larvae are much easier to find than the adults once the host plants are determined (Schweitzer et al., 2011).

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G3G4 SH

STATE PROTECTION: Listed as Significantly Rare by the Natural Heritage Program. That designation, however, does not confer any legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: Although *Acronicta sinescrypta* may turn out to be difficult to observe, partially accounting for its apparent rarity, it nonetheless appears to be strongly dependent on high quality Longleaf Pine Savannas, a habitat type that has undergone severe reduction, degradation, and fragmentation since Colonial settlement and is now one of our rarest kinds of natural community. If associated with herbaceous species or heaths, it is likely to be highly dependent on natural fires to maintain its habitats, but is also likely to be directly vulnerable to fire as eggs, larvae, or pupae. Species-specific fire management plans need to be developed to help protect this species, including the protection of refugia habitats during any one prescribed burn and the use of three-year burn rotations that will allow sufficient time for recolonization to occur from those refugia before they, in turn, are burned.