

ANNOTATED KEY TO THE PLUSIINAE MOTHS OF FLORIDA (LEPIDOPTERA: NOCTUIDAE)¹

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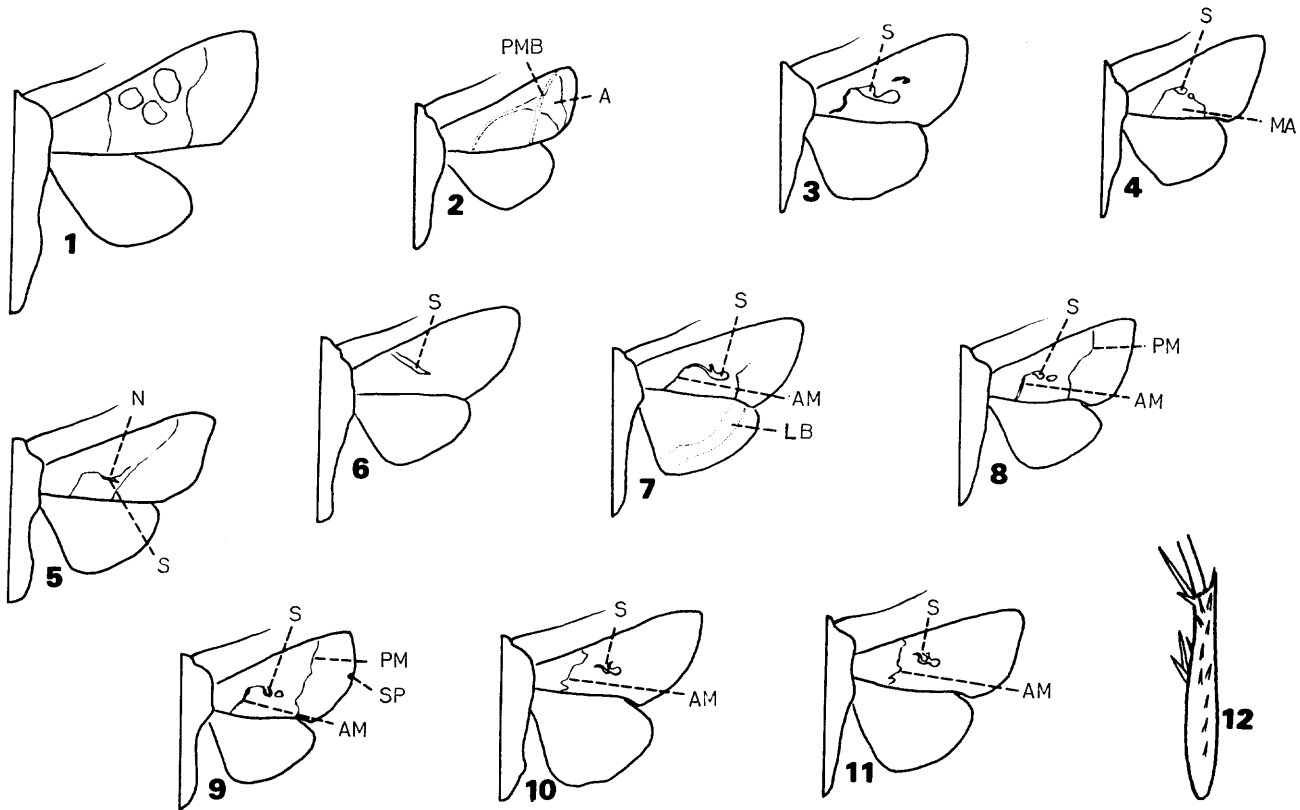
INTRODUCTION: THE PLUSIINAE WERE REVISED BY McDUNNOUGH (1944). IN FLORIDA, THIS SUBFAMILY IS REPRESENTED BY 13 SPECIES IN 9 GENERA (KIMBALL, 1965). AN ADDITIONAL SPECIES, TRICHOPLUSIA ABROTA (DRUCE), HAS BEEN REPORTED FROM FLORIDA ONLY ONCE AND SINCE KIMBALL REGARDS IT AS A STRAY, IT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE KEY. FORBES (1954) CONSIDERS ALL OF THESE SPECIES EXCEPT MOURALIA TINCTOIDES TO BELONG TO THE GENUS PLUSIA.

MOTHS OF THIS GROUP ARE OFTEN DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY UNLESS CORRECTLY DETERMINED SPECIMENS ARE AVAILABLE FOR COMPARISON. THE KEY PRESENTED BELOW, MODIFIED FROM FORBES (1954), IS INTENDED FOR USE ONLY ON FLORIDA SPECIMENS. THE FIGURES ARE DIAGRAMMATIC SHOWING ONLY THE CHARACTERISTICS NECESSARY TO USE THE KEY. IF THE SPECIES IS ILLUSTRATED IN HOLLAND (1903) OR KIMBALL (1965), REFERENCE IS MADE BY INDICATING H OR K, FOLLOWED BY THE PLATE NUMBER. MUCH OF THE INFORMATION ON DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE IS TAKEN FROM KIMBALL (1965).

1. FOREWING WITHOUT A SILVER STIGMA (S) OR STREAK ----- 2
FOREWING WITH A SILVER STIGMA (S) OR STREAK ----- 5
2. FOREWING GLOSSY GREEN (NOT ILLUSTRATED)----- PLUSIA BALLUCA GEYER
A NORTHERN SPECIES RECORDED ONLY ONCE FROM FLORIDA. H28:22. ----- 3
FOREWING NOT GREEN-----
3. FOREWING GREYISH-BROWN, WITH 3 CIRCLES BETWEEN ANTE AND POSTMEDIAL LINES (FIG. 1)-----
----- MOURALIA TINCTOIDES (GUENEE)
RARE ACCORDING TO KIMBALL. LOOKS MORE LIKE A CUTWORM MOTH THAN A PLUSIINAE.
K14:41. ----- 4
FOREWING BROWN, WITHOUT 3 CIRCLES-----
4. FOREWING NEARLY UNIFORM BROWN, SOMEWHAT PALER IN TERMINAL AREA (NOT ILLUSTRATED)-----
----- PLUSIA AEREA (HUBNER)
ANOTHER NORTHERN SPECIES COLLECTED ONLY A FEW TIMES IN THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE. H28:16.
FOREWING BROWN WITH A NARROW LIGHT POSTMEDIAL BAND (PMB) AND A TRIANGULAR GLOSSY COPPER-
BROWN AREA (A) TERMINALLY (FIG. 2) ----- AUTOPLUSIA ILLUSTRATA (GUENEE)
FOUND AS FAR NORTH AS CASSADAGA, STILL RARE. K14:34.
5. STIGMA (S) LARGE, EXTENDING MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH LENGTH OF WING, DEEPLY INCISED ABOVE
(FIG. 3)----- AUTOGRAPHA BILOBA (STEPHENS)
COMMON AND EASILY RECOGNIZED BY THE LARGE AND DISTINCTIVE STIGMA. H28:24, K14:36. ----- 6
STIGMA SMALLER AND SHAPED OTHERWISE -----
6. LOWER MEDIAL AREA (MA) AND TERMINAL AREA BRILLIANT DEEP GOLD (FIG. 4)-----
----- ARGYROGRAMMA VERUCCA (FABRICIUS)
COMMON AND STATEWIDE, DISTINCTIVE GOLD COLOR. H28:20, K14:35. ----- 7
LOWER MEDIAL AND TERMINAL AREAS NOT NOTICEABLY MORE BRILLIANT THAN REST OF FOREWING -----
7. FOREWING WITH AN INCONSPICUOUS SILVER STREAK (S) LOCATED AT POSTERIOR EDGE OF NOTCH (N) ON
ANTERIOR MARGIN OF LOWER MEDIAL AREA (FIG. 5) ----- AUTOPLUSIA EGENA (GUENEE)
BEAN LEAF SKELETONIZER. STATEWIDE, BUT APPARENTLY MORE COMMON IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE STATE. H28:29, K14:33. ----- 8
FOREWING WITH A CONSPICUOUS SILVER STREAK OR STIGMA (S)-----
8. STIGMA (S) AN OBLIQUE TRAPEZOID, CONTINUED BACK TO COSTA AS A PALE STRIPE (FIG. 6) -----
----- TRICHOPLUSIA OXYGRAMMA (GEYER)
STATEWIDE, DISTINCTIVE STIGMA SHAPE. H28:30, K14:38. ----- 9
STIGMA (S) NOT TRAPEZOIDAL -----
9. ANTEMEDIAL LINE (AM) DISTINCT, EVEN, OBLIQUE, NEARLY STRAIGHT OR EVENLY CURVED (FIGS. 7, 8,
AND 9) ----- 10
ANTEMEDIAL LINE (AM) INDISTINCT, WAVED OR SCALLOPED (FIGS. 10 AND 11) ----- 12
10. HINDWING WITH A DISTINCT LIGHT BAND (LB) (FIG. 7) ----- ANAGRAPHA FALCIFERA (KIRBY)
CELERY LOOPER, PROBABLY NOT AS COMMON OR ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT AS PREVIOUSLY.
H28:37 (AS SIMPLEX), K14:32. ----- 11
HINDWING WITHOUT A LIGHT BAND, GRADUALLY DARKER TOWARD BORDER -----
11. POSTMEDIAL LINE (PM) DARK AND WELL DEFINED, EVENLY CURVED, GROUND COLOR PINKISH-BROWN, NO
DARK SPOT ON MARGIN OF FOREWING (FIG. 8) ----- ARGYROGRAMMA BASIGERA (WALKER)
POSTMEDIAL LINE (PM) NOT WELL DEFINED AND NOT EVENLY CURVED, GROUND COLOR DULL BROWN OR
GRAY, DARK SPOT (SP) ON MARGIN OF FOREWING (FIG. 9) ----- PSEUDOPLUSIA INCLUDENS (WALKER)
STATEWIDE AND COMMON, SIMILAR IN GENERAL APPEARANCE TO RACIPLUSIA OU BUT EASILY
DISTINGUISHED BY THE NEARLY STRAIGHT ANTEMEDIAL LINE AND DARK SPOT ON FOREWING MARGIN.
LIFE HISTORY: MITCHELL (1967). MOST COMMON LOOPER ON SOYBEANS, SWEET POTATOES, AND
PEANUTS (CANERDAY AND ARANT, 1966; HENSLEY ET AL. 1964). K14:39.

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12. HIND TIBIA PROMINENTLY SPINED (FIG. 12); FOREWING WITH DARK AND LIGHT SHADED AREAS, ANTERIOR OPENING OF STIGMA V-SHAPED, USUALLY NARROWEST AT BASE (FIG. 10) ---- RACHIPPLUSIA OU (GUENEE) STATEWIDE AND COMMON. LIFE HISTORY: MITCHELL (1966), PRIMARILY FEEDING ON CLOVER (HENSLEY ET AL. 1964). H28:33, K14:40.
- HIND TIBIA WITHOUT VISIBLE SPINES; FOREWING NEARLY CONCOLOROUS THROUGHOUT, ANTERIOR OPENING OF STIGMA NOT V-SHAPED, WIDER BASALLY THAN AT NECK (FIG. 11) ----- TRICHOPLUSIA NI (HUBNER) CABBAGE LOOPER. PRINCIPAL LOOPER ON CRUCIFERS AND COTTON (CANERDAY AND ARANT 1966, HENSLEY ET AL. 1964). STATEWIDE AND COMMON. BIOLOGY: STOREY ET AL. (1962). H28:36 (AS BRASSICAE), K14:37.



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