

Title:

2008 Western New York Sweet Corn Pheromone Trap Network

Project Leader(s):

Abby Seaman, WNY Vegetable IPM Area Educator

Cooperator(s):

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Abstract:

Three of the important insect pests of sweet corn, European corn borer, corn earworm, and fall armyworm, cause damage to ears in their "worm" or larval stage. These pests are moths in their adult stage. A network of traps baited with the pheromones that male and female moths use to find each other has been operating across western New York for the past eleven seasons. The trap network allows growers, consultants, and Cooperative Extension and vegetable processor field staff to track the flights of the adults of these three pests, and trap numbers contribute to making informed decisions about when sweet corn fields need to be scouted or treated with an insecticide. This project is funded in part by in-kind contributions from growers and consultants who host and check traps.

Background and justification:

Sweet corn for the fresh and processing markets is an important crop throughout western NY. Fresh market sweet corn is grown on approximately 29,000 acres in New York with a value of 75.5 million dollars, while processing sweet corn is grown on approximately 18,400 acres with a value of 8.9 million dollars (2006 figures). Three major "worm" pests of sweet corn, European corn borer (ECB-E and ECB-Z), corn earworm (CEW), and fall armyworm (FAW) are moths in the adult stage; and can be monitored using pheromone traps. Pest management is an especially important aspect of fresh sweet corn production because the unhusked ear is marketed, and the buyer is frequently very sensitive to insect damage or the presence of larvae in the ear. Harvest quality requirements are different for processing corn, which usually receives fewer insecticide applications than fresh market corn. Integrated pest management practices are widely used on both crops to determine the need for insecticide applications. Pheromone trap catches provide valuable information to growers, consultants, and processor field staff making pest management decisions. Pheromone trap catches help growers and consultants decide when to start scouting fields for ECB, reinforce what scouts are finding, help choose the best spray materials for the pest complex that's present, and alert the industry to the arrival of the two migratory pests, CEW and FAW.

Pheromone trap catches are an integral part of weekly pest update newsletters sent by the Cornell Vegetable Extension program to approximately 260 subscribers in nine counties. The trap catches are used by a private consulting firm handling sweet corn pest management for the two

major food processors to time scouting and help make management decisions on approximately 18,400 acres of processing sweet corn.

The trap catches are also posted on the NYS IPM Program web site, the Northeast Weather Association web site, and a regional web site that includes trap catches from several northeastern states, making the information available to a large number of growers and extension personnel.

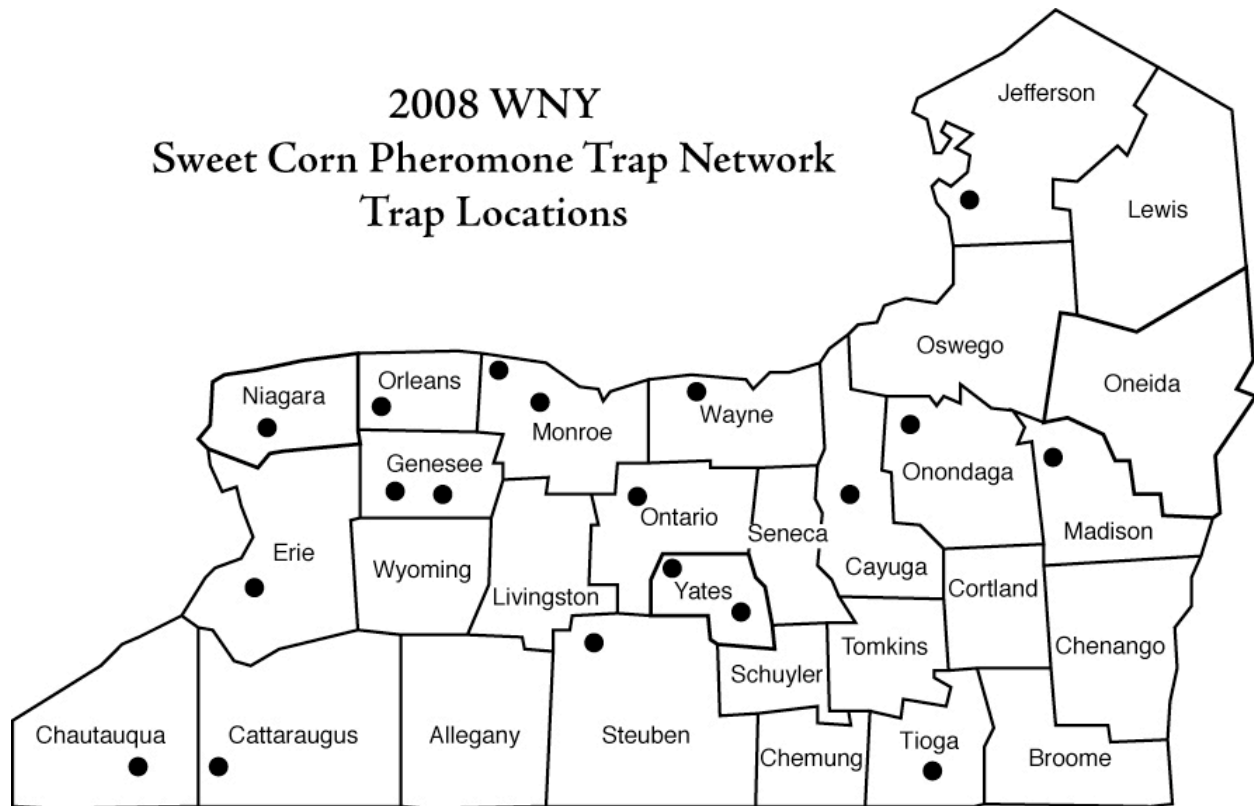
Objectives:

- 1) Establish and maintain a network of pheromone traps for sweet corn pests in western and central NY.
- 2) Provide regional trapping information and recommendations to agents, processor field staff, and consultants working with sweet corn.
- 3) Provide regional trapping information to growers, along with scouting and threshold recommendations.

Procedures:

- 1) Sets of one each of ECB-E, ECB-Z, CEW, and FAW traps were placed at each trapping location (Fig. 1). Scentry Heliothis net traps were used to trap ECB and CEW. The BCS/Agrisense Unitrap was used for FAW. Lures from Trece Inc. were used for both races of ECB, and lures were replaced every two weeks. Lures from Hercon Inc. were used for CEW, and replaced every two weeks. Lures from Scentry Inc. were used for FAW, and were replaced every three weeks. ECB traps were set up in mid-May at some locations, and as processing fields approached tassel emergence in other locations. CEW and FAW traps were set up in early to mid-July. Traps were placed at least 40 meters apart in grassy areas near corn fields, avoiding areas near hedgerows where air circulation is poor. Heliothis traps were mounted on posts such that the bottom of the trap is 0-6" above the grassy canopy. Unitraps were hung from short stakes to which angle brackets had been attached and were placed either in the field or at the edge of the field. Whenever possible, traps were moved to new fields as the previous fields matured and became less attractive to moths.
- 2) Cooperators checked traps weekly on Monday or Tuesday and sent catch numbers to Abby Seaman via phone or email. Weekly catches for each location were collated and posted, along with interpretation, and scouting and thresholds recommendations for fresh market sweet corn, on Tuesday evening on the vegetable extension staff electronic listserv and the following day on the NYS IPM and PestWatch web sites.
- 3) Information posted on the listserv was incorporated into crop and pest updates distributed weekly by local extension programs to approximately 260 subscribers, or provided to growers via direct contact with consultants. Trap numbers and recommendations are also available to farmers directly on the web.

Figure 1.



Results and discussion:

European corn borer flight started the first week of June and catches were low to moderate at most locations in 2008. ECB catches were high in Onondaga and Madison counties this season, however. Low numbers corn earworm were caught starting in mid-July, but catches were sporadic until mid-late September, when flights increased sharply in many areas. Fall armyworm were largely absent at most locations this season, with flights starting in September where they did occur. Graphs of trap catches for each site can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2

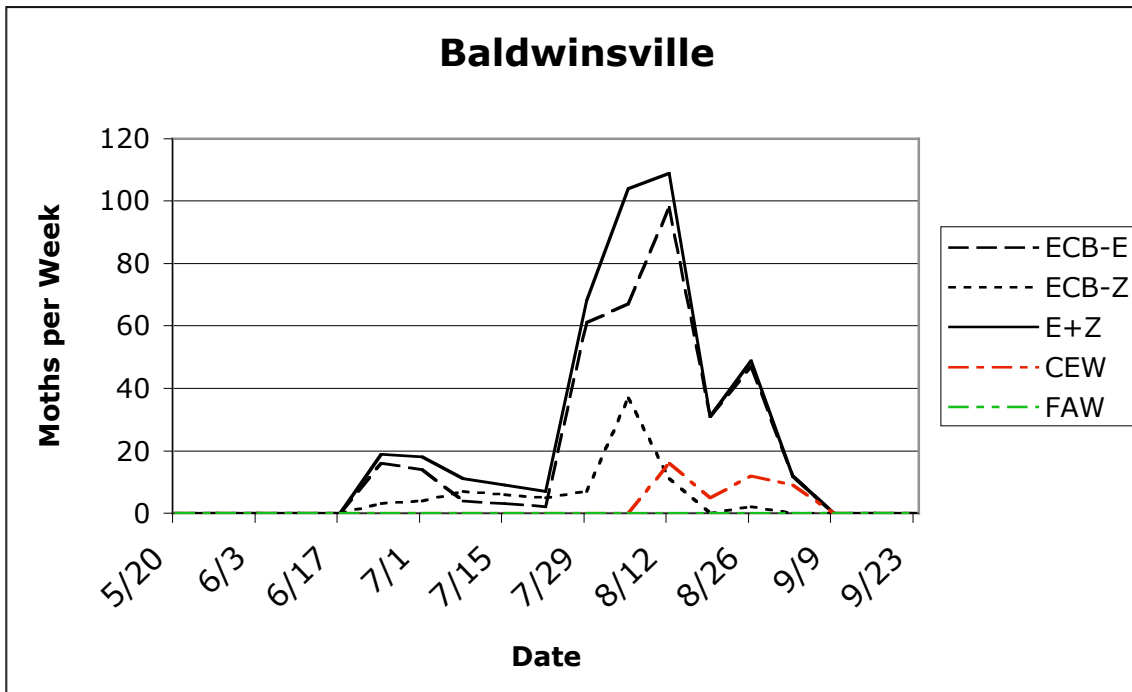
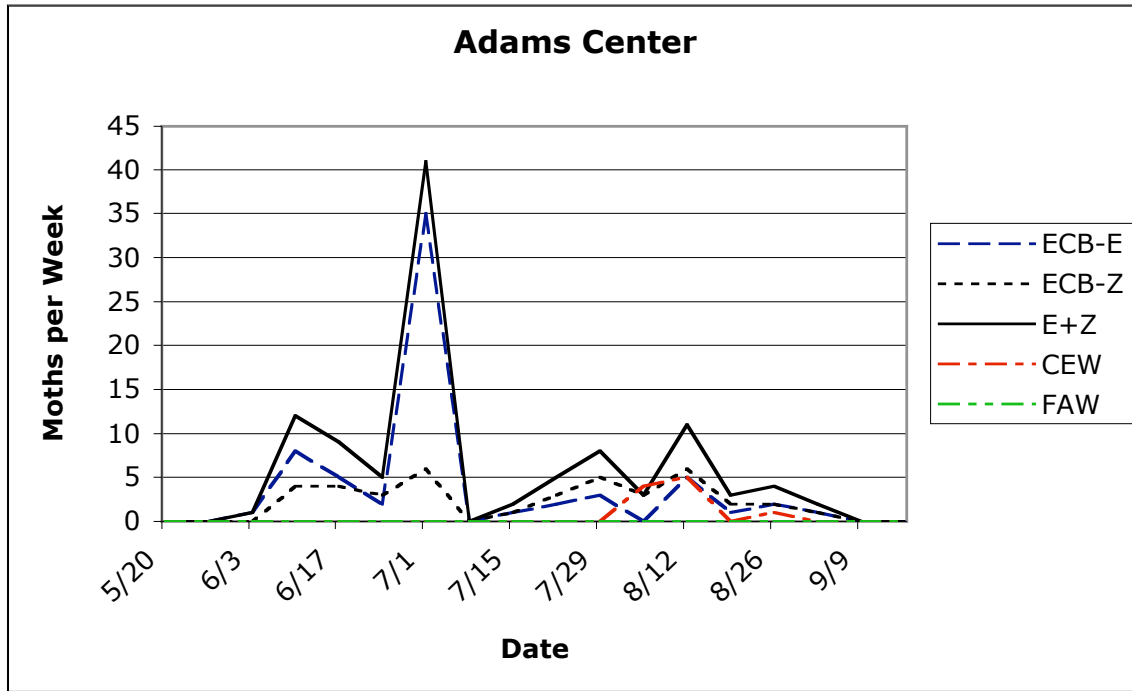


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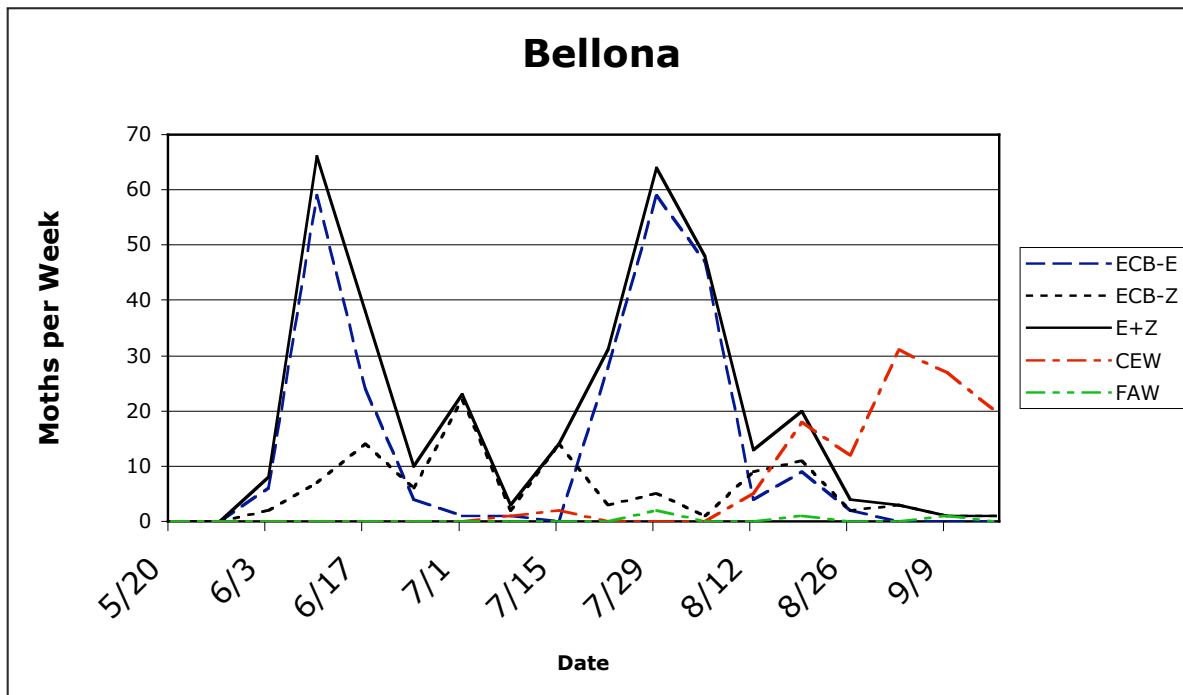
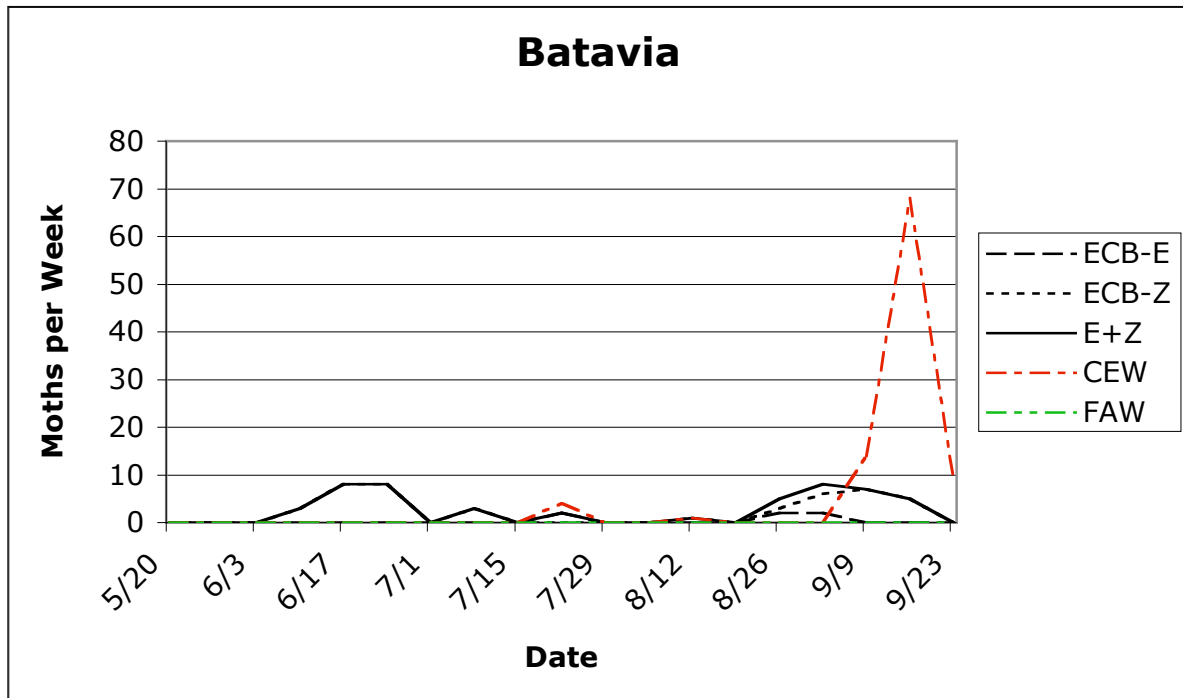


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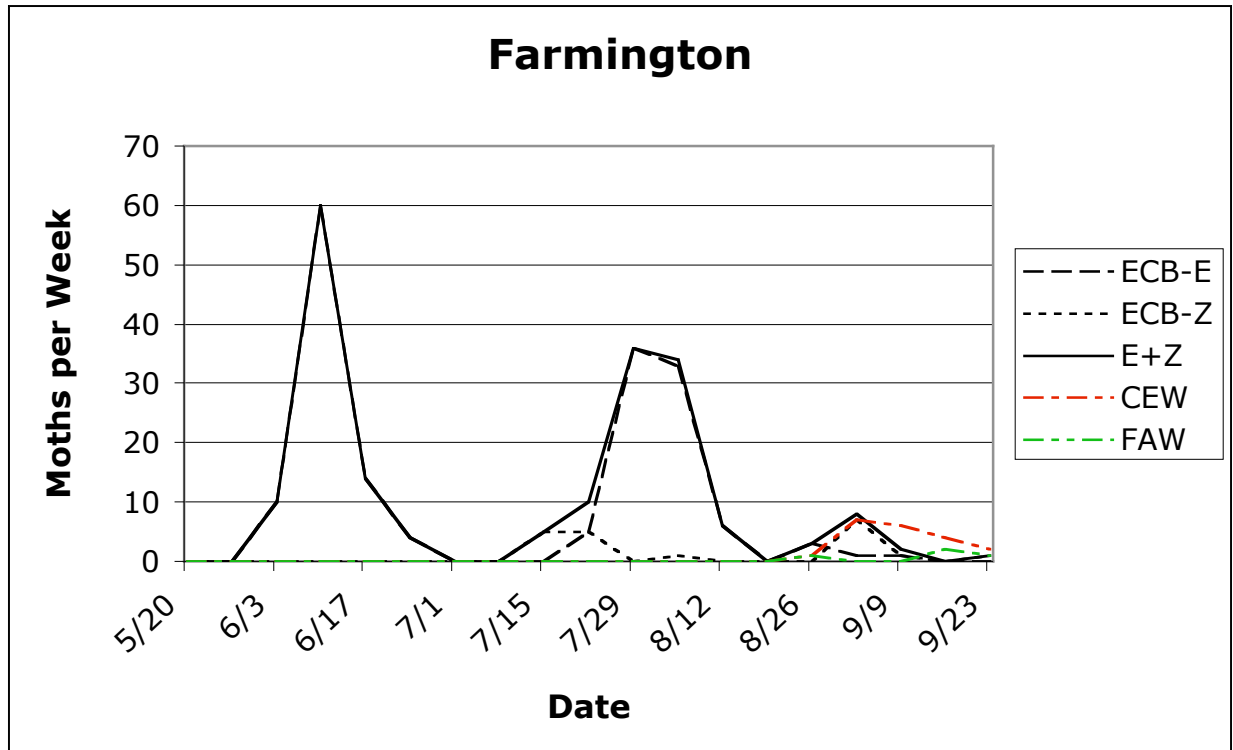
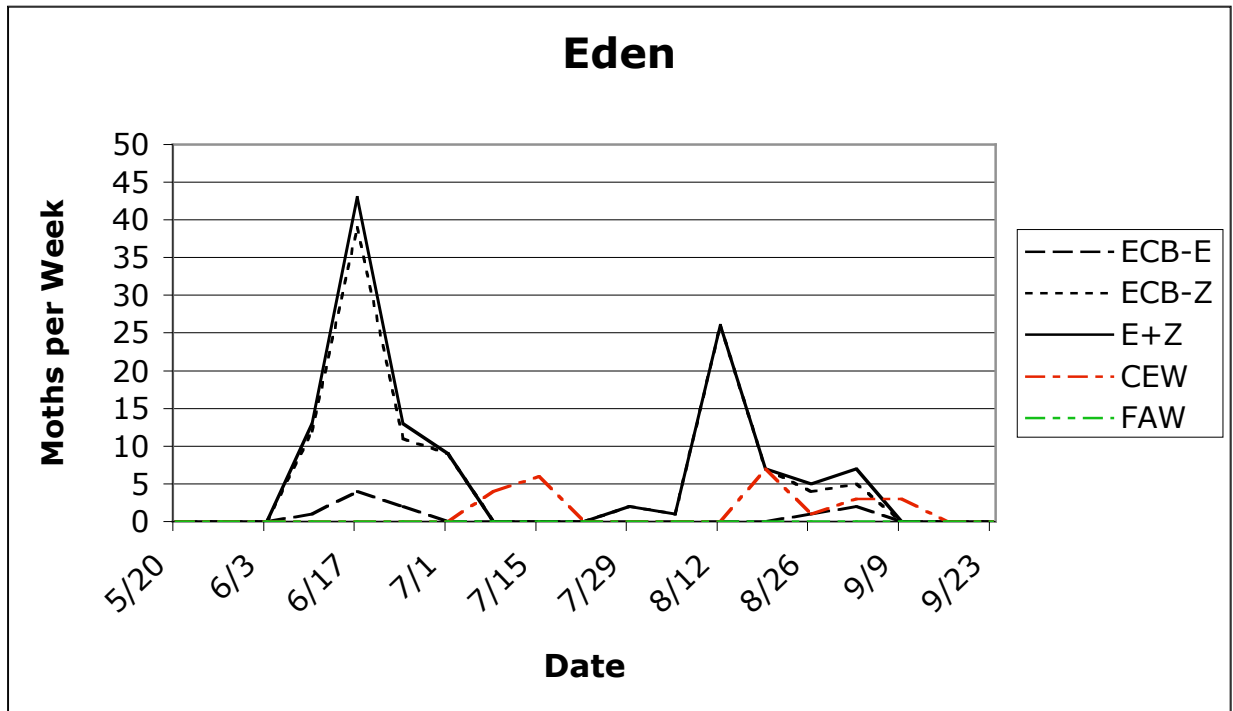


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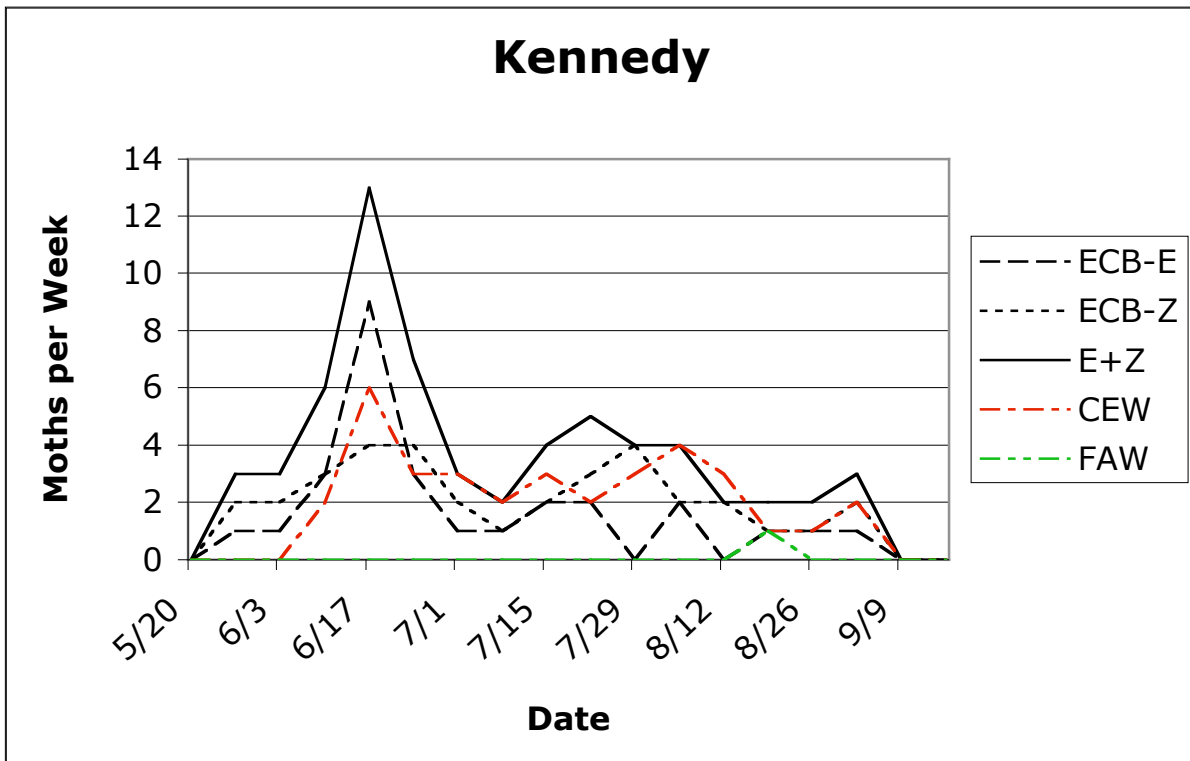
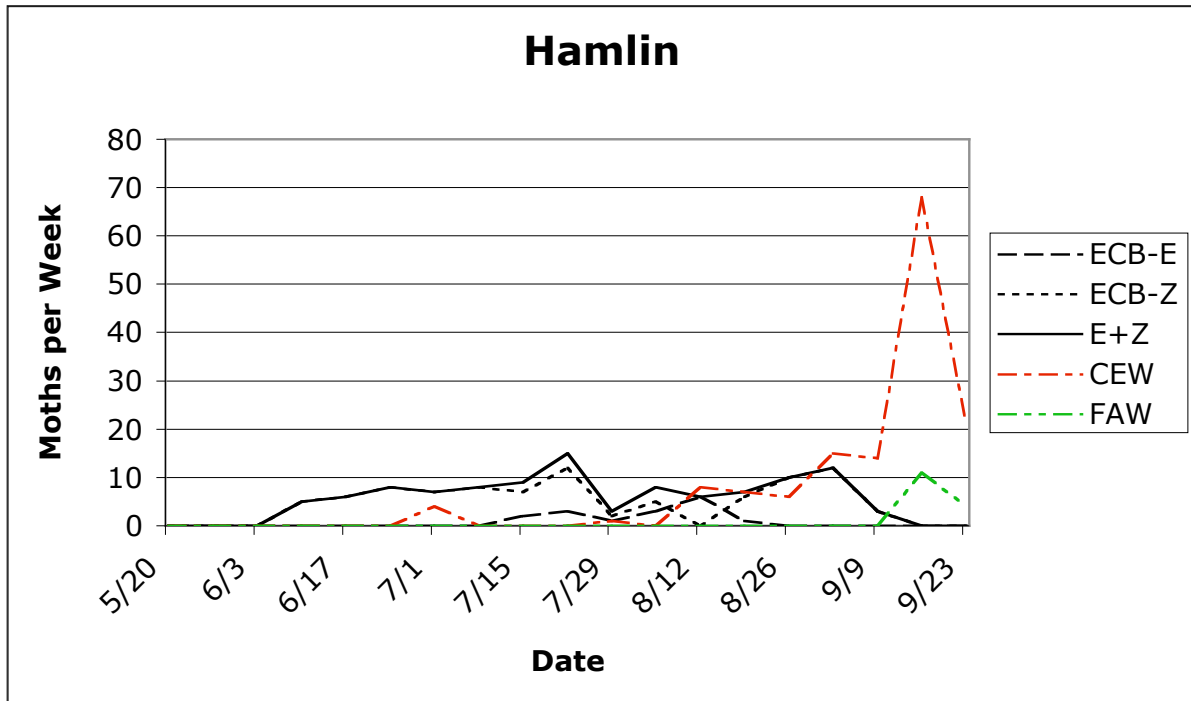


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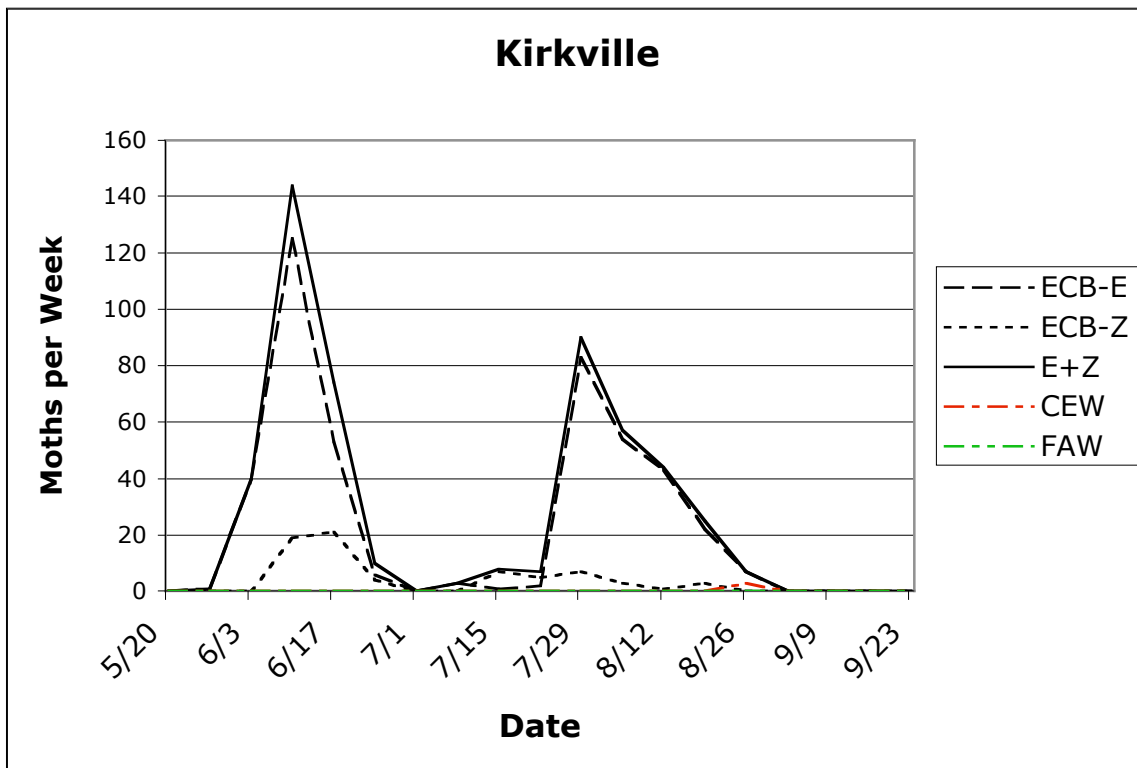
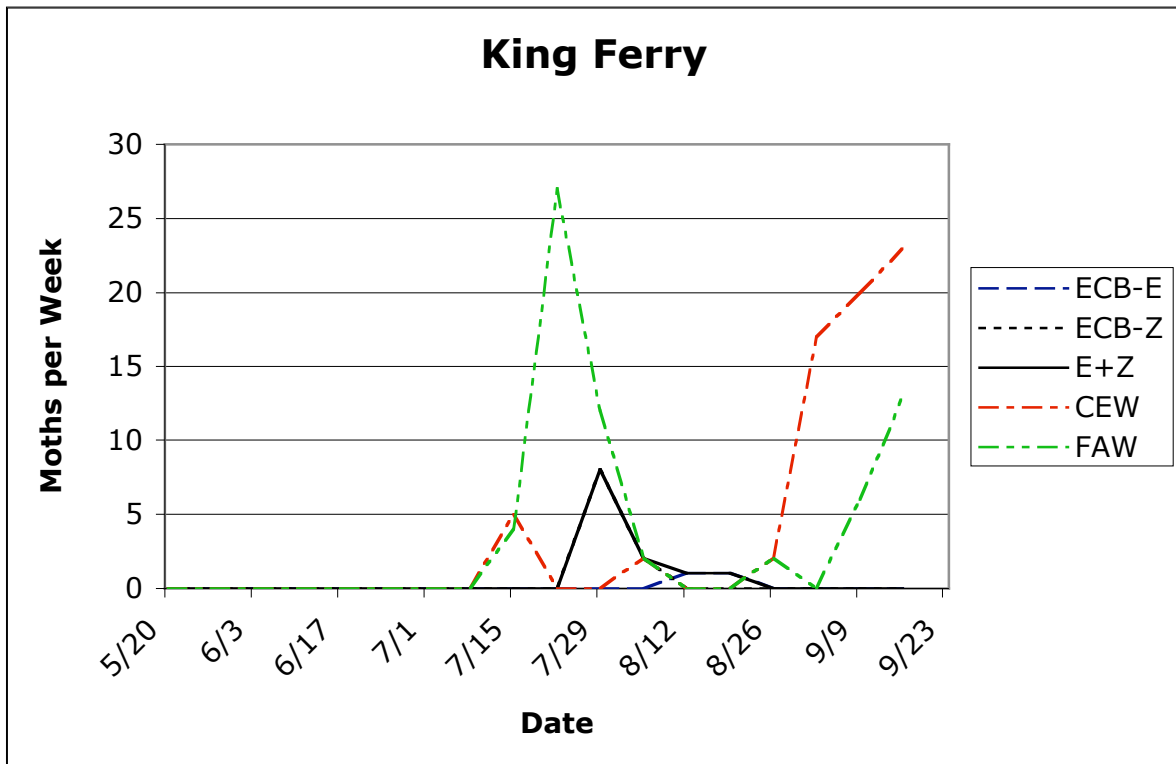


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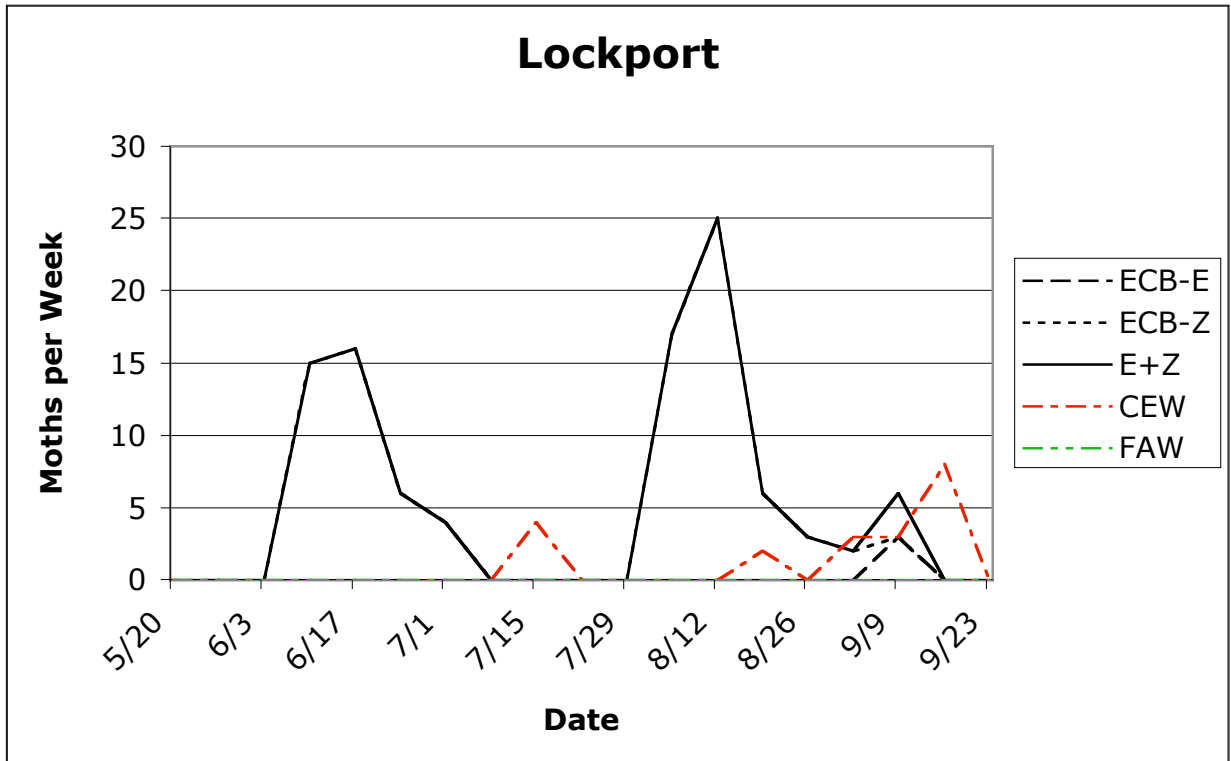
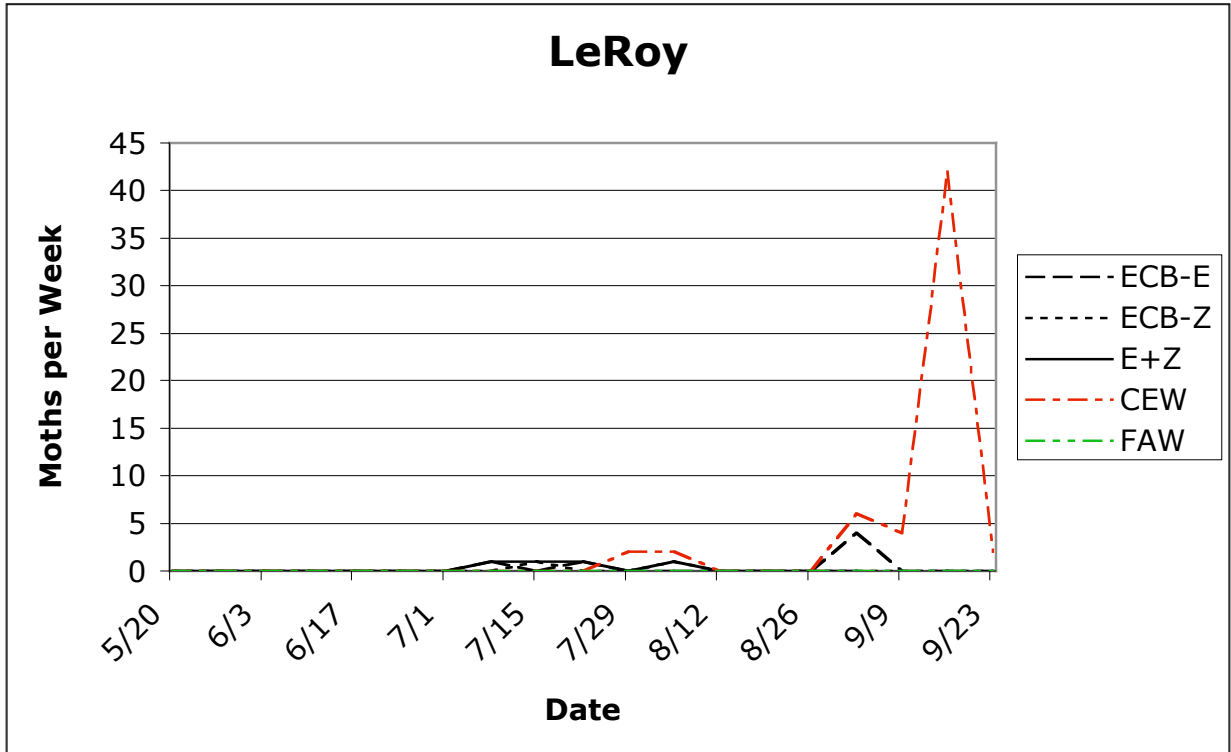


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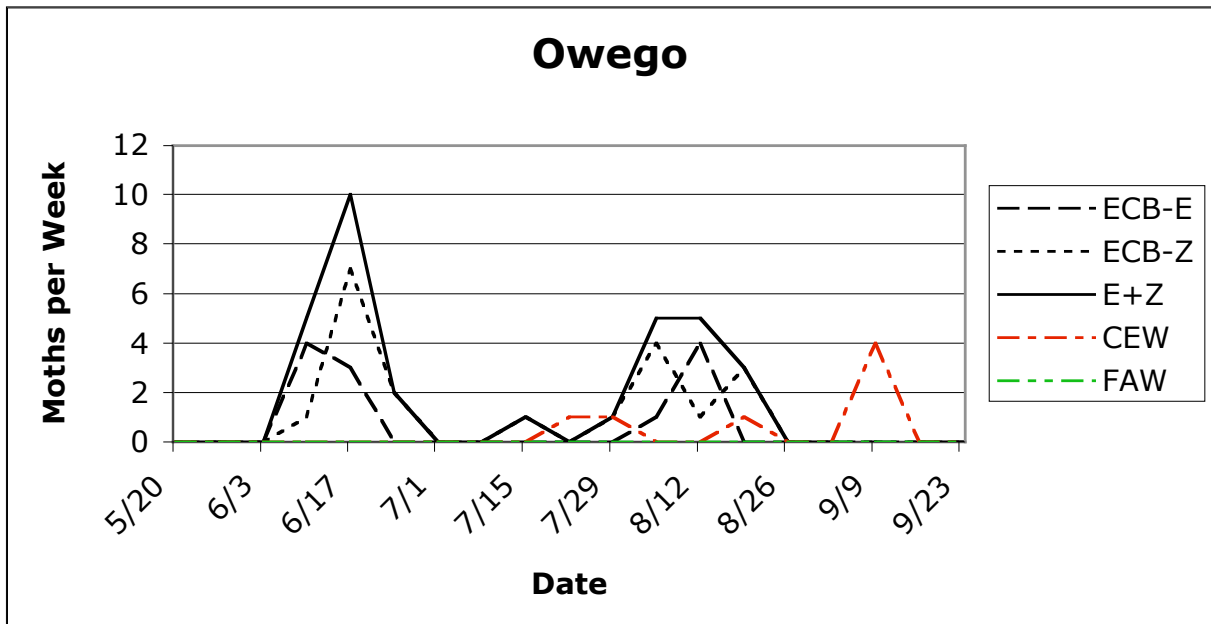
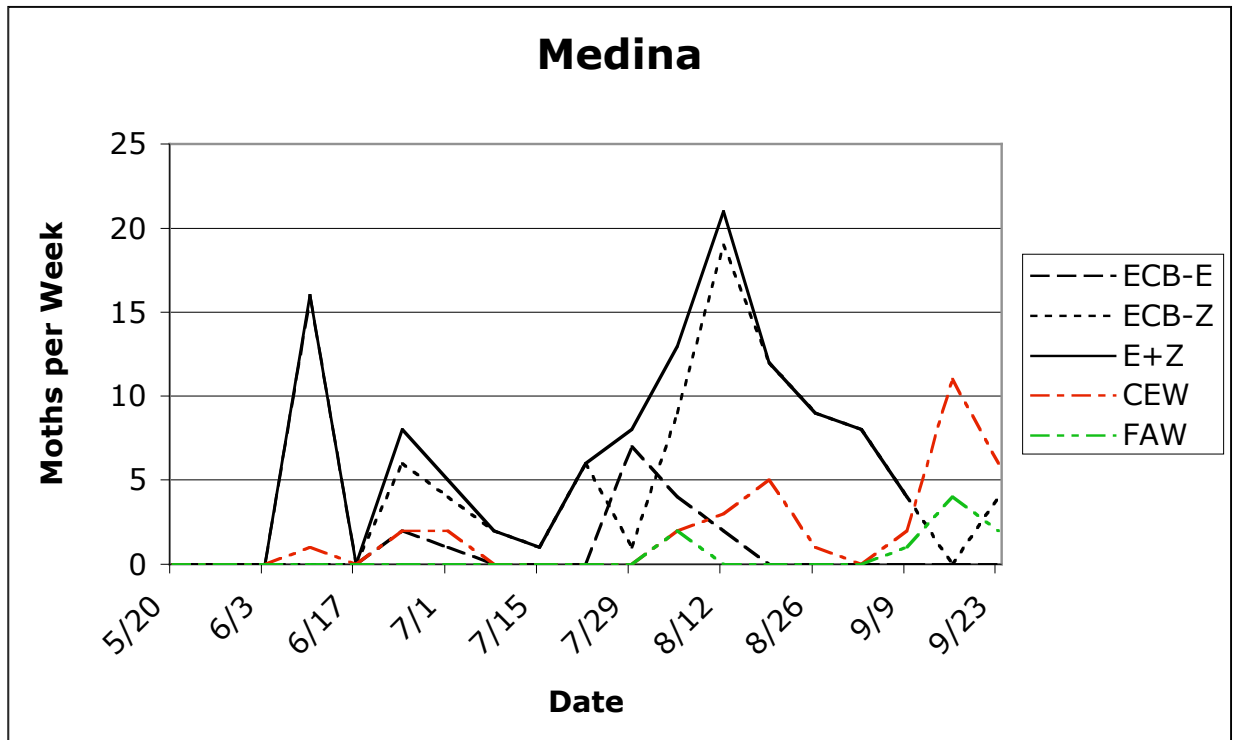


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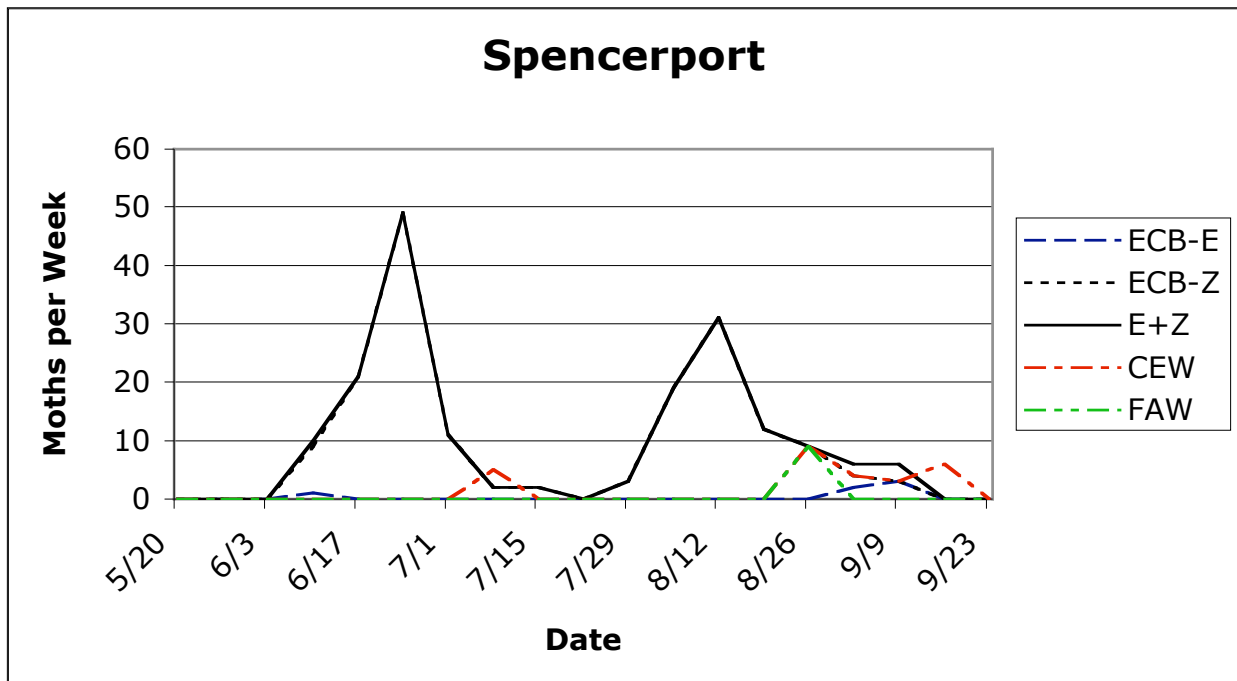
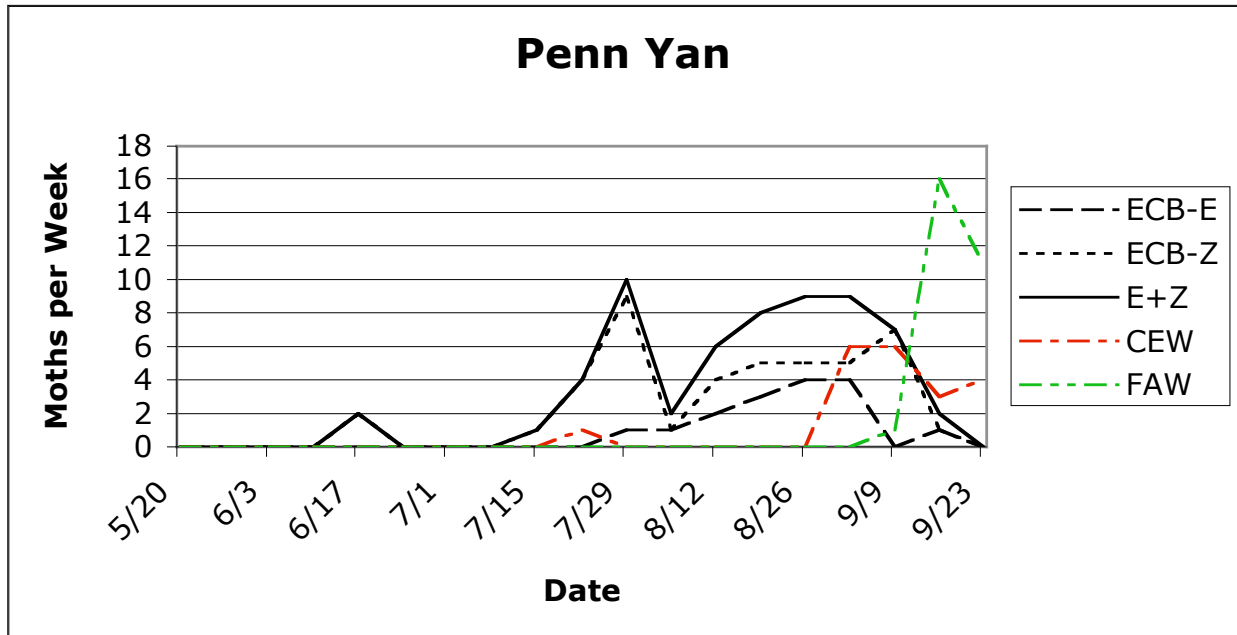
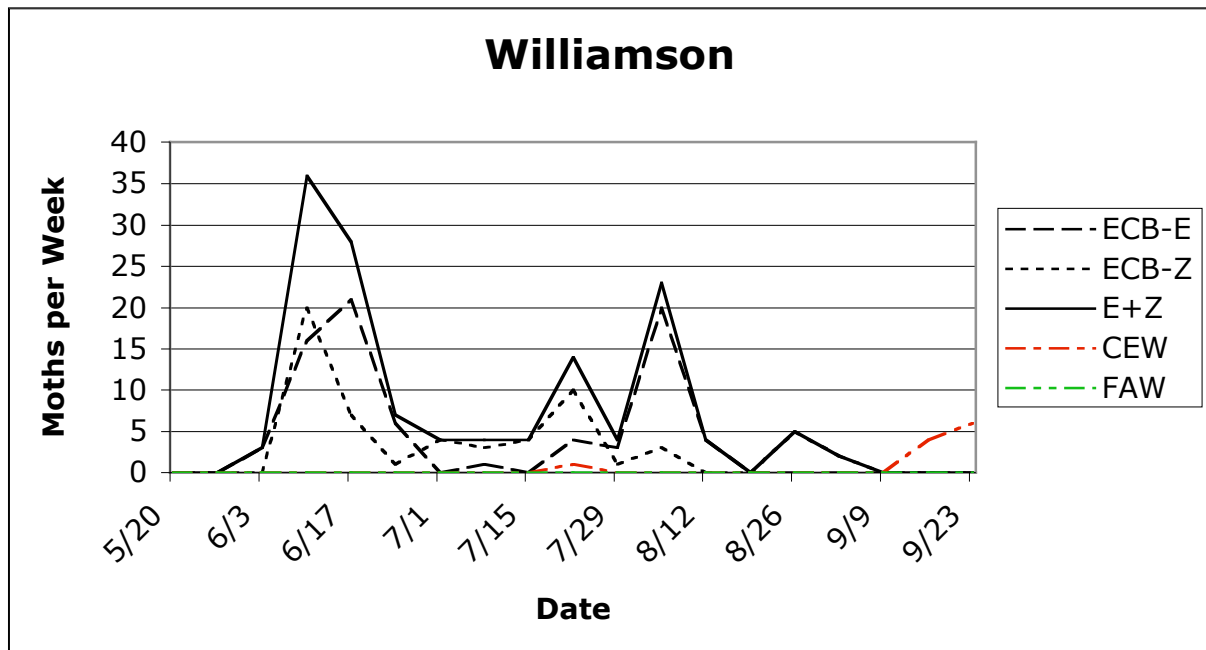
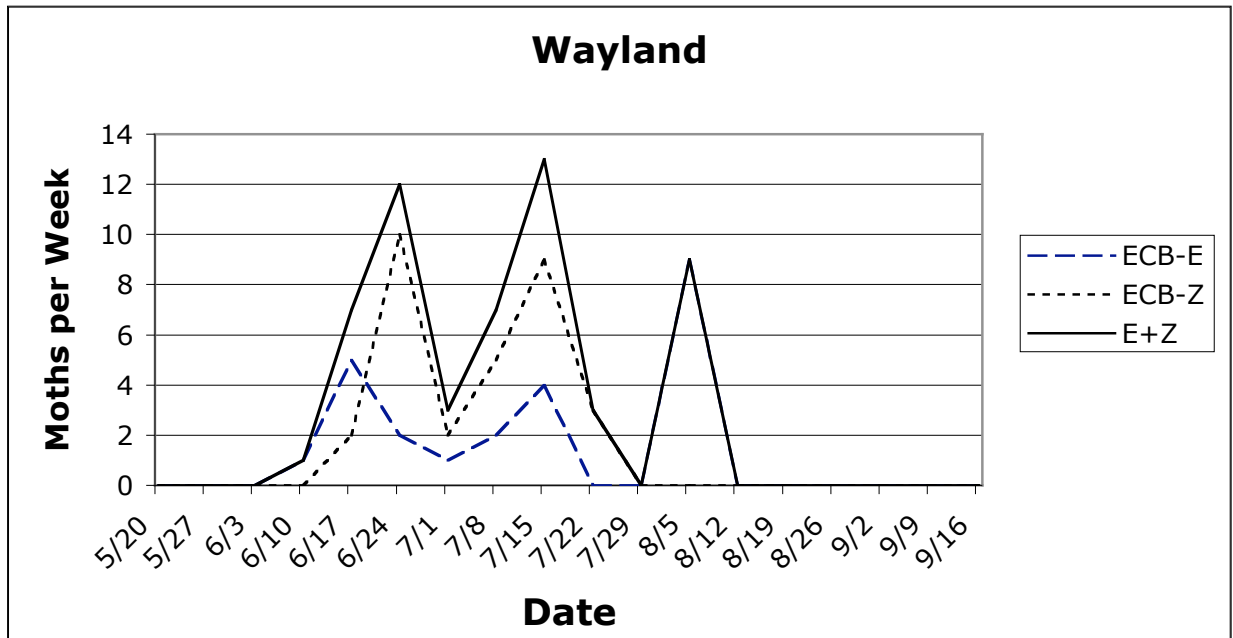


Figure 2 (cont.)



Project location(s):

Traps were located in Cayuga, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Madison, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates counties.