



**Natural Heritage
& Endangered Species
Program**

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Waxed Sallow
*Chaetagnlaea cerata***

State Status: **Special Concern**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: The Waxed Sallow (*Chaetagnlaea cerata*) is a noctuid moth with a wingspan of 46-50 mm (Forbes 1954). The forewing is grayish-brown, tinted with rose, with narrow yellow lines along the main veins and maroon, smoothly curved postmedial and antemedial lines, the latter margined with yellow proximally. A median line, similar in color but wider and more diffuse than the postmedial and antemedial lines, runs from the reniform spot to the inner margin. The reniform and orbicular spots are narrowly outlined in yellow. The hind wing is grayish-brown, slightly tinted with rose, with a small, obscure discal spot. Wings of freshly emerged individuals have a waxy sheen. The head and thorax are concolorous with the forewing, and the abdomen is concolorous with the hind wing. The Silky Sallow (*Chaetagnlaea sericea*) is similar, but with a reniform spot that is more elongate, and with a dark spot in the lower part of the reniform that is absent in the Waxed Sallow. The wings of the Silky Sallow are more brown, lacking the rose tint of the Waxed Sallow, with dark brown (as opposed to maroon) postmedial and antemedial lines.

HABITAT: In Massachusetts, the Waxed Sallow inhabits pitch pine-scrub oak barrens and heathlands on sandplains or rocky summits and ridges; occasionally also coastal



Chaetagnlaea cerata • Specimen from CT: Windham Co., Thompson, collected 28 Sep 1999 by B.D. Williams

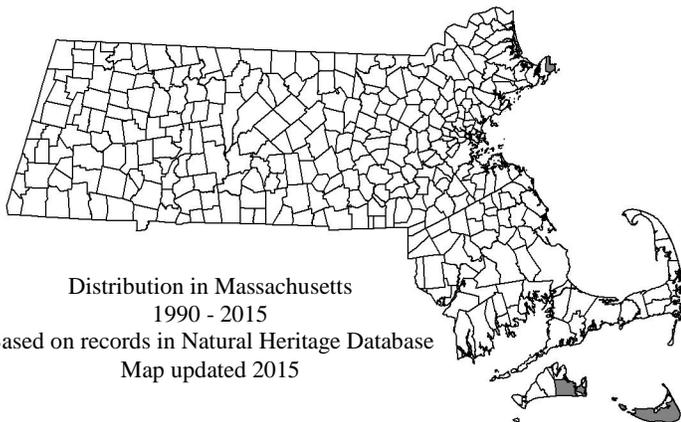
Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

forest with a heath understory, or maritime shrublands.

LIFE HISTORY: In Massachusetts, the Waxed Sallow flies in October, occasionally into early November. Eggs overwinter, hatching in early spring. Larvae feed on huckleberries (*Gaylussacia* spp.), lowbush blueberries (*Vaccinium angustifolium* and *V. pallidum*), and possibly other low-growing shrubs. Larvae pupate in late spring or early summer, diapausing through the summer and early fall.

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE: The Waxed Sallow is found from Maine south to West Virginia and west to Manitoba and Wisconsin; populations are disjunct and localized within this range (NatureServe 2015). In Massachusetts this species is restricted to the coastal plain in the eastern part of the state.



A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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STATUS AND THREATS: The Waxed Sallow is threatened by habitat loss and fire suppression. Other potential threats include introduced generalist parasitoids, aerial insecticide spraying, non-target herbiciding, off-road vehicles, and light pollution.

Literature Cited

- Forbes, W.T.M. 1954. *Lepidoptera of New York and Neighboring States*. Part III. Memoir 329, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, New York. 433 pp.
- NatureServe. 2015. *NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life*. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. <http://explorer.natureserve.org>.

Authored by M.W. Nelson, NHESP Invertebrate Zoologist, April 2015

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