



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Woolly Gray *Lycia ypsilon*

State Status: **Threatened**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: The Woolly Gray (*Lycia ypsilon*) is a geometrid moth with a wingspan of 30-35 mm in the male (Covell 1984); the wings of the female are nonfunctional, rudimentary buds. In the male, both the forewing and the hind wing are gray, with black, smoothly curved postmedial and antemedial lines. On the forewing, the median area is white, bisected by a black, relatively straight and wide median line. The postmedial line is margined by a brown band distally, and brown shading is present proximal to the antemedial line. There is a black apical dash on the forewing and a black anal dash on the hind wing. The reniform and discal spots are reduced to small, solid, black dots; the reniform spot may be obscured by the median line. White subterminal lines are present on the forewing and the hind wing, but may be obscure on the hind wing. In both sexes, the thorax and abdomen are densely hairy, gray or grayish-tan in color, with black, paired dots on the dorsum of each abdominal segment.

HABITAT: In Massachusetts, the Woolly Gray inhabits open, shrubby areas within pitch pine-scrub oak barrens.

LIFE HISTORY: In Massachusetts, male Woolly Gray moths fly in May. Females ascend shrub and tree trunks



Lycia ypsilon, male • Specimen from FL: Nassau Co., Fernandina Beach, collected 3 Mar 2000 by B.D. Williams

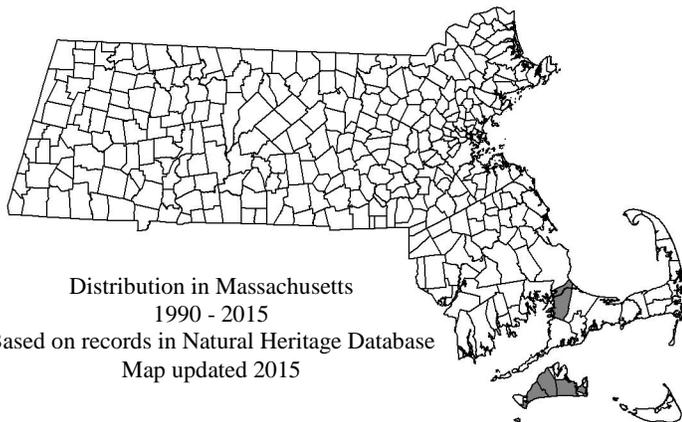
Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

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

and emit pheromone, waiting for males to find them by scent. The larval host plants are undocumented in Massachusetts; this species feeds on rose family plants (Rosaceae) elsewhere. Larvae are fully grown by July (Forbes 1948). Pupae overwinter.

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE: The Woolly Gray is found from Massachusetts south to Florida, and west to Minnesota and Texas (Covell 1984). In Massachusetts, this species occurs on Martha's Vineyard and inner Cape Cod.

STATUS AND THREATS: The Woolly Gray is threatened by habitat loss and suppression of fire, which is needed to maintain the open structure of its habitat. Other potential threats include introduced generalist parasitoids, aerial insecticide spraying, non-target herbiciding, off-road vehicles, and light pollution.



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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581; tel: 508-389-6300; fax: 508-389-7890; www.mass.gov/dfw

Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for 'endangered wildlife conservation' on your state income tax form, as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

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Literature Cited

- Covell, C.V. 1984. *A Field Guide to Moths of Eastern North America*. Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, Massachusetts. 496 pp.
- Forbes, W.T.M. 1948. *Lepidoptera of New York and Neighboring States*. Part II. Memoir 274, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, New York. 263 pp.

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

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