



## Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

[www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp)

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

## Cord-grass Borer *Photodes inops*

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

**DESCRIPTION:** The Cord-grass Borer (*Photodes inops*) is a noctuid moth with a wingspan of 25-39 mm. The forewing is tan in color, with dark brown subterminal, postmedial, and antemedial lines. The postmedial line is relatively smoothly curved, the antemedial line is jagged, and the subterminal line is smoothly curved, wider and more diffuse than the postmedial and antemedial lines. The reniform and orbicular spots are dark brown, oblong rings, the reniform spot with a black dot in the lower portion. The hind wing is light tan in color; faint brown shading toward the wing margin, a faint brown median line, and/or a faint brown discal spot may be present. The head and thorax are concolorous with the forewing, and the abdomen is concolorous with the hind wing.

**HABITAT:** In Massachusetts, the Cord-grass Borer inhabits fresh or brackish coastal marshes and margins of coastal salt ponds.

**LIFE HISTORY:** In Massachusetts, the Cord-grass Borer flies in late August and September. Eggs hatch in the autumn, and first instar larvae overwinter, resuming feeding in the spring (NatureServe 2015). The larvae bore into and feed on prairie cord-grass (*Spartina pectinata*), becoming fully grown and pupating by July.



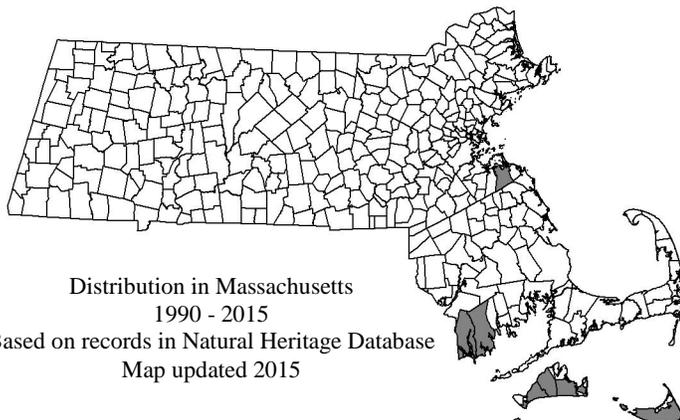
*Photodes inops* ▪ Specimen from MA: Nantucket Co., Nantucket, collected 5 Sep 2005 by M. Mello

### Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

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

**GEOGRAPHIC RANGE:** The Cord-grass Borer is found in coastal habitat along the Atlantic Coast from Nova Scotia south to Connecticut; and in prairie habitat in the Midwest (Michigan and Ohio west to North Dakota and Iowa) and southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (MPG 2015, NatureServe 2015). In Massachusetts, the Cord-grass Borer occurs along the coast south of Boston.

**STATUS AND THREATS:** The Cord-grass Borer is threatened by habitat loss and hydrologic alteration that disrupts the natural tidal flooding of its habitat. Other potential threats include invasion by exotic plants, eutrophication or other water pollution, 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

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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**

- MPG. 2015. *Moth Photographers Group*. Mississippi Entomological Museum, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi.  
<http://mothphotographersgroup.msstate.edu>.
- NatureServe. 2015. *NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life*. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. <http://explorer.natureserve.org>.

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