



**Natural Heritage
& Endangered Species
Program**

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Drunk Apamea Moth
*Apamea inebriata***

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

DESCRIPTION: The Drunk Apamea Moth (*Apamea inebriata*) is a noctuid moth with a forewing length of 15-19 mm (Ferguson 1977). The forewing is longitudinally streaked with straw-yellow along the costal margin, reddish-brown through the median area, black between the median area and the inner margin, and whitish-gray along the inner margin, giving an overall appearance that is cryptic on dead wood (Mikkola et al. 2009). The reniform spot is faintly outlined with black and white dots. The hind wings are tan to brown, darker toward the wing margin, with a faint, elongate discal spot. Elongate scales on the head and thorax are a mixture of straw-yellow, reddish-brown, black, and whitish-gray, matching the overall coloration of the forewing. The abdomen is tan with elongate, reddish-brown and white scales dorsally. *Apamea inebriata* was described and separated from the similar and more common and widespread *Apamea verbascoides* by Ferguson (1977). As compared to *A. verbascoides*, *A. inebriata* is slightly smaller (forewing length ~1 mm shorter on average) and has a brighter appearance overall, with brown streaks that are more reddish, and the gray area along the inner margin more whitish and contrasting. *A. inebriata* has a black basal dash that is shorter and thinner (sometimes almost completely absent) as compared to *A. verbascoides*.



Apamea inebriata • Specimen from MA: Plymouth Co., Plymouth, collected 27 Jul 2002 by M.W. Nelson

Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

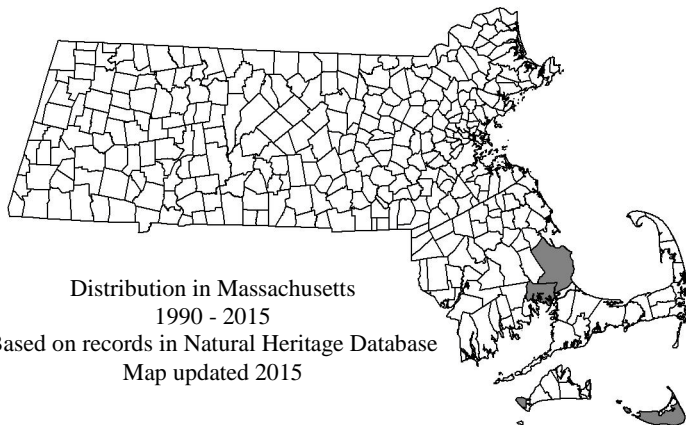
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Additionally, the small white patch of scales at the juncture of wing veins M₃ and Cu₁ is more pronounced in *A. verbascoides*, much smaller or absent in *A. inebriata*.

HABITAT: In Massachusetts, the Drunk Apamea Moth inhabits fresh or brackish, grassy wetlands, including marshes, bogs, shrub swamps, and coastal plain pond shores.

LIFE HISTORY: In Massachusetts, adult Drunk Apamea Moths fly in July and early August. Early instar larvae overwinter, and complete development in spring and early summer. The larval host plants of the Drunk Apamea Moth are undocumented, but probably consist of one to several species of wetland grasses (Poaceae).

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE: The Drunk Apamea Moth is endemic to the coastal plain of eastern North America,



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

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from Nova Scotia south to North Carolina (Mikkola et al. 2009); it appears to be most common in New Jersey (Ferguson 1977). In Massachusetts, this species is known from southeastern Plymouth County, Cape Cod, and the offshore islands.

STATUS AND THREATS: The Drunk Apamea Moth is threatened by habitat loss and hydrologic alteration that disrupts the natural 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.

Literature Cited

- Ferguson, D.C. 1977. A new North American species of *Apamea* formerly confused with *A. verbascoides* (Guenée) (Noctuidae). *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 31(1): 57-62.
- Mikkola, K., J.D. Lafontaine, and J.D. Gill. 2009. Noctuoidea, Noctuidae (part): Xyleninae (part): Apameini (part): *Apamea* group of genera. Fascicle 26.9. 192 pp. in: Hodges, R.W. (ed.). *The Moths of North America*. Allen Press, Lawrence, Kansas.

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

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