DESCRIPTION: The Herodias Underwing Moth is an erebid moth with a wingspan of 56-65 mm (Covell 1984). The forewing is brown with dark longitudinal streaks along the veins, alternating with white streaks distally, prominent white shading along the costal margin, an elongated dark brown patch extending from just proximal to the reniform spot, through the reniform spot nearly to the apex, and gray shading overlying the brown along the inner margin. The reniform spot is obscure, matching the dark brown patch surrounding it, but often faintly outlined with white. The hind wing is bright crimson with two black bands and a white fringe. The head and thorax are grayish-brown, matching the inner margin of the forewing, and the abdomen is tan.

HABITAT: In Massachusetts, the Herodias Underwing Moth inhabits xeric, open pitch pine-scrub oak barrens and scrub oak thickets on sandy soil or rocky summits and ridges.

LIFE HISTORY: In Massachusetts, the Herodias Underwing Moth flies in July and August. Eggs are laid on the stems of scrub oak (Quercus ilicifolia), where they overwinter, hatching in early spring. Larvae feed on catkins and new leaves of scrub oak, and pupate in June.

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE: The Herodias Underwing Moth occurs in sandplain habitats in southeastern Massachusetts, on eastern Long Island, New York, and in southern New Jersey; as well as on rocky summits and ridges from Massachusetts south through the Appalachian Mountains to North Carolina (Schweitzer et al. 2011).

STATUS AND THREATS: The Herodias Underwing Moth 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