



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered Species  
Program**

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*Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

**Southern Ptichodis  
*Ptichodis bistrigata***

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

**DESCRIPTION:** The Southern Ptichodis (*Ptichodis bistrigata*) is an erebid moth with a wingspan of 27-32 mm (Covell 1984). The ground color of both the forewing and hind wing varies from gray, to grayish-brown, to brown. The hind wing is typically more brown than the forewing in individuals with a gray forewing (Forbes 1954). On the forewing, the subterminal area has a line of dark brown dots, which may be obscure in some individuals. The postmedial and antemedial lines are relatively straight, both consisting of dual adjacent lines of reddish-brown and yellow. The reniform spot is a relatively small, elongate patch of dark brown scales. The hind wing is typically unmarked; occasionally a faint, pale median line may be present at the inner margin. The head and thorax are concolorous with the ground color of the forewings, and the abdomen is concolorous with the hind wings. The Southern Ptichodis is similar to the Common Ptichodis (*Ptichodis herbarum*). However, the male Common Ptichodis has a black spot in the basal area of the forewing, and both sexes have an elliptical reniform spot that is relatively large and pale (D. Lafontaine, pers. comm.).



*Ptichodis bistrigata* ▪ Specimen from NC: New Hanover Co., Carolina Beach State Park, collected 6 Apr 1994 by J.B. Sullivan, R. Broadwell, and B. Smith ▪ © Canadian National Collection

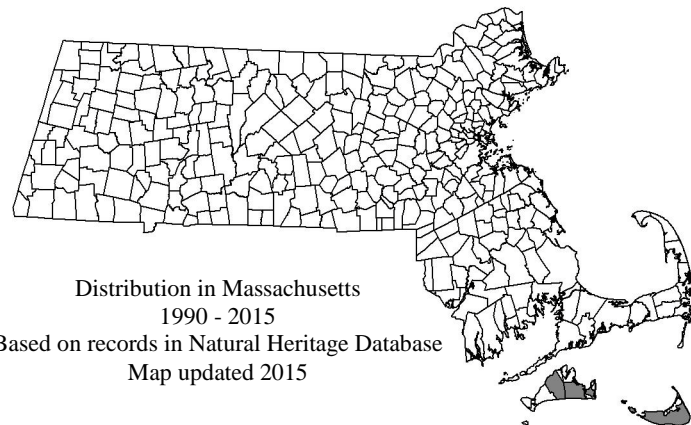
**Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts**

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

heathlands, and grasslands.

**HABITAT:** In Massachusetts, the Southern Ptichodis inhabits sandplain pitch pine-scrub oak barrens,

**LIFE HISTORY:** In Massachusetts, adult Southern Ptichodis moths fly from late May to late June. The larval host plants of this species are undocumented. Presumably the pupa overwinters.



**GEOGRAPHIC RANGE:** The range of the Southern Ptichodis extends from Massachusetts south to Florida, and west to Missouri and Texas (Covell 1984). In Massachusetts, this species is only known from the offshore islands of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket.

**STATUS AND THREATS:** The Southern Ptichodis 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,

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

**Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife**

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aerial insecticide spraying, non-target herbiciding, off-road vehicles, and light pollution.

### **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. 1954. *Lepidoptera of New York and Neighboring States*. Part III. Memoir 329, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, New York. 433 pp.

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

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