



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Waxed Sallow Moth

Chaetagnela cerata

State Status: **Special Concern**

Federal Status: None

Description: The Waxed Sallow is a noctuid moth with a wingspan of 35-38 mm. The forewings are grayish-brown, tinted with rose, with narrow yellow lines along the main veins, maroon antemedial and postmedial lines, and round orbicular and reniform spots narrowly outlined in yellow. The hind wings are nondescript, grayish-brown. Wings of freshly emerged individuals have a waxy sheen.

Habitat: The Waxed Sallow Moth inhabits pitch pine-scrub oak barrens and heathlands on sandplains or rocky summits and ridges; occasionally also coastal forest with a heath understory, or maritime shrublands.

Life History: Adult moths fly mainly in October, occasionally into early November. Eggs overwinter, hatching in early spring. Larvae feed on huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), lowbush blueberries (*Vaccinium angustifolium* and *V. pallidum*), and possibly other low-growing shrubs. Larvae pupate in late spring or early summer, diapausing through the summer and early fall.

Range: The Waxed Sallow Moth is found from Maine (at least historically) west to Manitoba and south to West Virginia; populations are very localized and disjunct within this range. In Massachusetts it is restricted to the coastal plain in the southeastern part of the state.



Photo by D.L. Wagner

Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

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

Threats

- Habitat loss
- Fire suppression
- Invasion by exotic plants
- Introduced generalist parasitoids
- Insecticide spraying
- Off-road vehicles
- Light pollution

