



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Hairy Honeysuckle *Lonicera hirsuta* Eat.

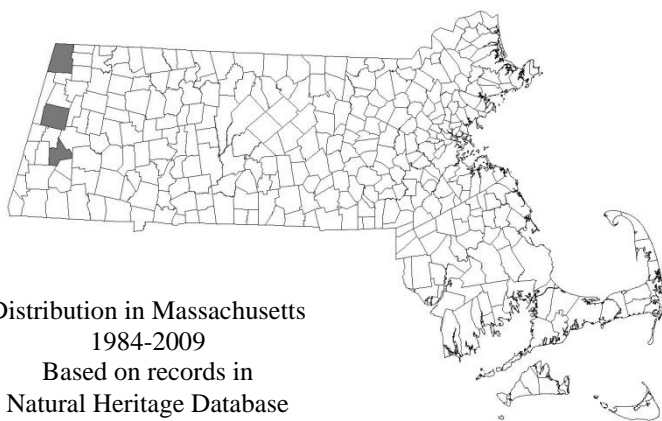
State Status: **Endangered**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Hairy Honeysuckle is a twining and climbing, somewhat shrubby vine which may reach 3 meters (10 ft) high. The young stems of this plant are very hairy and glandular. The dull green leaves are 6-12 cm (2.5-4.75 in) long and 3-8 cm (1.2-3.2 in) wide. The leaf blades are broadly tapered almost equally at both ends and are more or less hairy on both sides. The upper one or two leaf pairs unite at their bases to form a roundish disc with rather pointed tips. One to four sticky-hairy, yellow flowers are arranged in a whorl on a stalk just above the uppermost leaf pair. These attractive, 2.5 cm (1 in) long flowers are two-lipped with the lower lip divided into four lobes. The tube of each flower is slightly swollen near the base. Flowering season is from mid- to late June. The fruit is a cluster of red berries.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Wild Honeysuckle (*L. dioica*) is also vine-like, but has longer (5-12 cm) leaves than Hairy Honeysuckle and flowers are pale yellowish-purple. Moreover, the whole plant is hairless and leaves are whitened (glaucous) beneath. Other honeysuckles likely to occur with Hairy Honeysuckle are bushy shrubs with many stems.



Photo by Bruce Sorrie, NHESP



Distribution in Massachusetts
1984-2009
Based on records in
Natural Heritage Database

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: Hairy Honeysuckle is found in open to lightly shaded exposures on calcareous rocky slopes or acidic slopes with calcareous till. This vine may be found under White Ash, European Buckthorn, White Birch, Basswood, Black Cherry, Red Oak, Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Black

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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Locust, Witch Hazel, Hazelnut, Sassafras, or Flowering Dogwood. Surrounding plants may include Round-leaved Dogwood (*Cornus rugosa*), sedge (*Carex eburnea*), Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), Morrow Honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*), Wild Honeysuckle (*Lonicera dioica*), and Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum dioicum*). All Massachusetts populations occur at sites which have been disturbed in the past.

THREATS: Reasons for this plant’s rarity include loss of habitat through forest succession and human development. There are also few suitable habitats. Competition and loss of light from Morrow Honeysuckle, a pernicious and aggressive alien shrub, also threatens this species.

RANGE: Hairy Honeysuckle is found from southwestern Quebec and western New England to western Ontario and Minnesota, south to Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Updated 2015

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