



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered Species  
Program**

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*Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

**Melsheimer's Sack-bearer  
*Cicinnus melsheimeri***

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

**DESCRIPTION:** Melsheimer's Sack-bearer (*Cicinnus melsheimeri*) is a mimallonid moth with a wingspan of 35-50 mm (Covell 1984). The forewing is hooked at the tip, pale, grayish-pink in color, becoming brown toward the outer margin, and overlaid with black speckling. The gray postmedial line is straight, curving inward near the costal margin; the antemedial line is also gray, but toothed and curving more sharply inward at the costa. The reniform spot is a small, gray dash. Like the forewing, the hind wing is pale, grayish-pink in color, becoming brown toward the outer margin, overlaid with black speckling; the postmedial line is gray and straight. On both the forewing and hind wing, the upper layer of scales is underlaid with bright orange, particularly toward the outer margin, which becomes more apparent as the wings wear. The head, thorax, and abdomen match the pale, grayish-pink of the inner portions of the wings, and are also overlaid with black speckling.

**HABITAT:** Melsheimer's Sack-bearer is more ecologically generalized southward, but in Massachusetts it is restricted to sandplain pitch pine-scrub oak barrens, especially scrub oak thickets. It may also be found in shrubby grasslands and heathlands with a component of scrub oak.



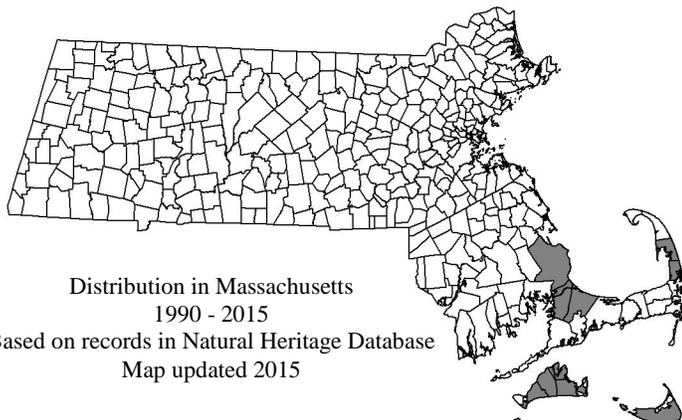
*Cicinnus melsheimeri* ▪ Specimen from MA: Plymouth Co., Plymouth, adult female collected 26 Jun 2002 by M.W. Nelson, reared from egg, adult emerged 20 Jun 2003

**Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts**

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

**LIFE HISTORY:** Adult moths fly in June and early July, with the peak flight in late June. Larvae feed on scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*) from summer through fall, constructing a portable, protective shelter ("sack") out of leaves and silk. Larvae overwinter and pupate in the spring.

**GEOGRAPHIC RANGE:** Melsheimer's Sack-bearer is found from Massachusetts south to Florida, and west to Wisconsin and Texas (Covell 1984). It is rare and local in the northern part of its range, more common from the New Jersey pine barrens southward. In Massachusetts it is restricted to Cape Cod and the offshore islands, west to Plymouth.



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

**Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife**

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**STATUS AND THREATS:** Melsheimer's Sack-bearer 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**

Covell, C.V. 1984. *A Field Guide to Moths of Eastern North America*. Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, Massachusetts. 496 pp.

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

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