

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Invertebrate Abstract

Element Code: IILEY0S070

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Litodonta* sp. 1 nr. *alpina*

COMMON NAME: A Notodontid Moth

SYNONYMS:

FAMILY: Notodontidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Benjamin, 1932.

TYPE LOCALITY:

TYPE SPECIMEN: Specimens in the Gillette Museum at Colorado State Museum. Identified by comparison with Type of *Litodonta alpina* and specimens of that species from several localities.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:

DESCRIPTION: For the family the adults are medium sized to large, typically with a relatively long forewing and stout body that extends two or more times the width of the hind wing. The head often has scale tufts or crests. The antennae are usually bipectinate to the tip in the male, filiform or sometimes bipectinate in the female. Proboscis is usually well developed and coiled. The abdomen is densely covered with long, slender scales and sometimes dorsal scale tufts at the base. The tips of the tibial spurs are serrated. These are mostly dull-colored, tan, brown, or gray moths. The larval body is stout, nearly bare, sometimes with a long secondary setae, often possessing one or more protuberances. Larvae have two MD setae above the spiracle on abdominal segments, whereas other noctuoids have only one.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Larvae have two MD setae above the spiracle on abdominal segments, whereas other noctuoids have only one.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

TOTAL RANGE: Southeastern Arizona.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Known only from Upper Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains, Cochise County.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Very few species feed as adults and so they probably do not live long. Larvae of this family of moths are usually gregarious. When disturbed they often freeze with ends of the body elevated.

REPRODUCTION: For the family, eggs are laid on the leaves of host plants.

FOOD HABITS: For the family, larval foods include a wide diversity of dicot angiosperms, mainly woody shrubs and trees; and a few feed on grasses. The caterpillars eat foliage and feed in groups to protect themselves from attacks by birds. Some produce chemicals and adopt threatening postures. Certain prominent caterpillars are described as “processionary” due to their nighttime habit of moving in a long, head-to-tail line when seeking food. During the day, these species often shelter en masse, sometimes in a loose, silk nest.

HABITAT: Rich oak, alligator juniper, pine, and Douglas-fir forest.

ELEVATION:

PLANT COMMUNITY:

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None

STATE STATUS: None

OTHER STATUS: None

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Threats to this species include its extremely limited known range. A single event, such as an extensive fire, could eliminate this moth’s only known population.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Life history, population status, and population range studies need to be performed.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: USFS - Coronado National Forest.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**REFERENCES:**

- Borror, D.J. and R.E. White. 1970. Insects: Peterson Field Guide. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, Massachusetts. Pp: 234.
- McGavin, G.C. 2002. Smithsonian Handbooks Insects Spiders and Other Terrestrial Arthropods. New York, New York. Pp: 166.
- Milne, L. & M. Milne. 1980. National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Insects and Spiders. Alfred. A. Knopf. New York, New York. Pp: 783-784.
- NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2002. Version 1.6. Arlington, Virginia, USA: NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: January 27, 2005).
- Preston-Mafham, R. & K. Preston-Mafham. 1993. The Encyclopedia of Land Invertebrate Behaviour. The MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Pp: 143-144.
- Resh, V.H. & R.T. Carde. 2003. Encyclopedia of Insects. Academic Press. New York, New York. Pp: 658-659.

MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Revised: 2005-09-30 (AMS)

To the user of this abstract: you may use the entire abstract or any part of it. We do request, however, that if you make use of this abstract in plans, reports, publications, etc. that you credit the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Please use the following citation:

Arizona Game and Fish Department. 20XX (= **year of last revision as indicated at end of abstract**). X...X (= **taxon of animal or plant**). Unpublished abstract compiled and edited by the Heritage Data Management System, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ. X pp.