

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Invertebrate Abstract

Element Code: IILEP88073

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Megathymus ursus deserti*

COMMON NAME: Desert Yucca borer

SYNONYMS:

FAMILY: HesperIIDae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Wielgus, Wielgus, Wielgus: Allu Museum, Bulletin no.9: 1-11. 1972.

TYPE LOCALITY: 0.5 mile to 1.5 mile north of Camp Creek, Maricopa County, Arizona.

TYPE SPECIMEN: LACM ENT 161802

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: There are four species in this genus, 3 of them are located in Arizona. This is one of 3 subspecies in this species, 2 of which are located in Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: For the species *Megathymus ursus* the antennal club is white. The upper side is black and the forewing has white spots near the apex and a wide band varying from yellow to orange. The hind wings have no markings. The underside of the wing is gray with 2 white spots near the costa. The wingspan is 2.5 to 3 inches (6.3-7.6 cm). The subspecies has a broad gray band on the underside of the hind wing.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color photo of species (Lasley in <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/byflyusa/mx/420.htm>).

Color photo of species (In <http://www.nearctica.com/butter/plate33/Mursus.htm>).

Color drawing of species (Tilden, 1986: pl. 33).

TOTAL RANGE: Central and southern Arizona.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: See "Total Range."

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: For *Megathymus ursus* the adults have a rapid flight. A young caterpillar eats leaf tips and then burrows into the root and makes a tent. Older caterpillars hibernate in their tents and eventually pupate there. Chrysalids can move up and down in their tents.

REPRODUCTION: For the species *Megathymus ursus* the female glues eggs singly on the leaves of the host. They have one brood from May-August.

FOOD HABITS: Caterpillars of the species *Megathymus ursus* host plants include Schott's yucca (*Yucca schottii*), Arizona yucca (*Y. arizonica*), banana yucca (*Y. baccata*) and Torrey's yucca (*Y. torreyi*). A young caterpillar eats leaf tips and then burrows into the root and makes a tent. The adults do not feed but males do sip moisture from mud.

HABITAT: For the species *Megathymus ursus* they are found in grassy shrubland and open yucca-oak woodland.

ELEVATION: Type specimen was found between 3,500 and 3,680 feet.

PLANT COMMUNITY: Unknown

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:

STATE STATUS:

OTHER STATUS:

Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3
1999)

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Unknown

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: Unknown

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Unknown

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: Unknown

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

- Lasley, G.W. 2002. USGS. Available at <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/byflyusa/mx/420.htm>.
- NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2001. Version 1.6. Arlington, Virginia, USA: NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: May 22, 2002).
- Nearctica. Available at <http://www.nearctica.com/butter/plat33/Mursus.htm>.
- Tilden, J.W. 1986. A Field Guide to Western Butterflies. Houghton Mifflin Co, Boston, MA. Pp.206-207.
- Type specimen database. Available: <http://www.phorid.net/type%20database/details.asp?key=LACM> ENT161802.
- USDA, Forest Service Region 3. 1999. Regional Forester's Sensitive Species List.
- Wielgus, Wielgus, and Wielgus. 1972. A new subspecies of *Megathymus ursus* Poling from Arizona with observations and notes on its distribution and life history. *Ally museum, Bulletin no. 9*: 1-11.

MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Revised: 2002-05-31 (AMS)

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