

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Invertebrate Abstract

Element Code: IILEX13050

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Proserpinus vega*

COMMON NAME: Vega Sphinx

SYNONYMS:

FAMILY: Sphingidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Dyar, 1903. Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington, 5: 291.

TYPE LOCALITY: Las Vegas Hot Springs, New Mexico.

TYPE SPECIMEN:

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: There are only two species in this genus in Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: Wingspan is 2 3/8- 2 5/8 inches (6.1-6.7 cm). The forewing upper side is green-gray with darker green at the base, median area, and tip. Hind wing upper side is red-orange with a black outer margin and a tan patch on the inner margin. For this family, the antennae are distinctive, usually lamellate ventrally or bi to quadripectinate, tapering toward the apex, which is upturned or hooked. The caterpillars have a large hornlike projection at the end of the abdomen that gives the caterpillar a formidable appearance although it is harmless.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: *P. vega* has a very large and dark basal patch as the forewing meets the thorax that is lacking in *P. terlooii*. There are also three prominent longitudinal stripes on the thorax of *P. vega* that are lacking in *P. terlooii*.
(<http://www.silkmoths.bizland.com/pvega.htm>).

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color photo of moth and caterpillar (Opler in <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/moths/usa/1098.htm>)
Color photo (Walsh in <http://www.silkmoths.bizland.com/pvega.htm>)
Color photo (In <http://cgic.ucol.mx/~mabl/sphingidaeWeb/Prosvega.jpg>)

TOTAL RANGE: Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and south to at least Mexico City, Mexico.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Yavapai and Pima counties.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: The pupae probably wiggle to surface from subterranean chambers just prior to eclosion. They are strong fliers with a very rapid wing beat. This makes them resemble hummingbirds or large bees. These moths lack hearing organs or tympana.

REPRODUCTION: Females call in the males with a pheromone released from a gland at the tip of the abdomen. Eggs hatch about 10 days after the female deposits them on the host plants. The newly hatched caterpillars eat their eggshells. Adults fly as a single brood in mid August.

FOOD HABITS: Caterpillars feed on primrose. Adults are nectarivores. Adults fly in the afternoon, nectaring from flowers.

HABITAT: Desert.

ELEVATION:

PLANT COMMUNITY:

POPULATION TRENDS:

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None

STATE STATUS:

OTHER STATUS:

MANAGEMENT FACTORS:

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Population status, ecological requirements, and conservation need should be determined.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:****Revised:** 2004-12-03 (AMS)

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