



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Melsheimer's Sack Bearer

Cicinnus melsheimeri

State Status: **Threatened**

Federal Status: None

Description: Melsheimer's Sack Bearer is a mimallonid moth with a wingspan of 35-50 mm. The wings are pale pink, overlaid with black speckling, with gray postmedial lines and small, gray reniform spots; on the forewings the postmedial lines curve inward near the costal margins. The forewings are hooked at the tips.

Habitat: Melsheimer's Sack Bearer is more ecologically generalized to the South, but in Massachusetts it is restricted to sandplain pitch pine/scrub oak barrens, especially scrub oak thickets within frost pockets.

Life History: Adult moths fly in June and early July, with the peak flight normally 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.

Range: Melsheimer's Sack Bearer is found from Massachusetts south to Florida, west to Wisconsin and Texas. 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.



Photo by M.W. Nelson

Adult Flight Period in Massachusetts

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

Threats

- Habitat loss
- Fire suppression
- Invasion by exotic plants
- Introduced generalist parasitoids
- Insecticide spraying
- Off-road vehicles
- Light pollution

