

Pitch Pine Woodland East of Moore Draft

Invertebrate surveys using a blacklight, a device used to collect moths, by PNHP staff uncovered populations of two moth species of concern, a **noctuid moth** (*Aplectoides condita*) and the **maroonwing** (*Sideridis maryx*). Both of these species inhabit drier conifer woodlands and barrens in Pennsylvania.

Threats and Stresses:

Habitat degradation and habitat loss are major threats to these species of moths. Since these moths rely on dry, conifer-dominated, barrens habitat, a type which is dependent on periodic disturbance through fire, decades of fire suppression has led to an overall reduction in available habitat. As with all moths and butterflies, gypsy moth control in this area would have a negative effect on the populations of these species of concern. Additionally, the maroonwing is noted to be vulnerable to light pollution.

Conservation Recommendations:

The most immediate threat to the populations of these moths is the loss of habitat, and measures to maintain the habitat should be enacted. This may require the implementation of small prescribed burns to improve the barrens habitat. Gypsy moth spraying should maintain a no-spray buffer around the pitch pine barrens to avoid affecting the populations of these two moths. Some forestry practices that favor pitch pine and maintain more open habitat patches characteristic of barrens could benefit these species. Since the maroonwing is easily affected by light pollution, artificial lighting at the nearby camp should be kept to a minimum.