Blueberry Gray

Blueberry Gray

Photo credits: *Canadian Biodiversity Research Facility (CBIF)*

Scientific Name *Glena cognataria* (H?bner, 1831)

Family Name Geometridae
Loopers, Span Worms, Inch Worms, Geometer Moths

Did you know?
The status of the blueberry gray is poorly known in New York. This species was historically widespread on Long Island and may still occur in unknown locations there.

Summary

Protection Not listed in New York State, not listed federally.

This level of state protection means: The species is not listed or protected by New York State.

Rarity G4, S2

A global rarity rank of G4 means: Apparently secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
A state rarity rank of S2 means: Typically 6 to 20 occurrences, few remaining individuals, acres, or miles of stream, or factors demonstrably make it very vulnerable in New York State.

Conservation Status in New York

The current status is poorly known for New York. This species should turn up more widely than recent specimens known to the New York Natural Heritage Program indicate, both on ridges in the southeastern counties and on Long Island.

Short-term Trends

The short-term trends for this species are unknown.

Long-term Trends

The long-term trends indicate that the population has undergone a moderate to substantial decline (25% to 75% decline).

Conservation and Management

Threats

Loss of habitat to development or fire suppression is a threat. Potentially, wildfires or poorly planned prescribed burns could be a threat since it is unlikely that any life stage of this moth would survive in a fire. Gypsy Moth (Lymantria dispar) spraying should not impact this species if Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis - a bacterial biological control used on Gypsy Moth caterpillars) is used, due to the phenology (timing of life cycles) of this species.

Habitat

This is a species of heathlands, including bogs and pine barrens. A key habitat feature is extensive areas of Lowbush Blueberry (Vaccinium angustifolium and Vaccinium pallidum).

Associated Ecological Communities

Chestnut Oak Forest
A hardwood forest that occurs on well-drained sites in glaciated portions of the Appalachians, and on the coastal plain. This forest is similar to the Allegheny oak forest; it is distinguished by fewer canopy dominants and a less diverse shrublayer and groundlayer flora. Dominant trees are typically chestnut oak and red oak.

Pitch Pine-oak-heath Rocky Summit
A community that occurs on warm, dry, rocky ridgetops and summits where the bedrock is non-calcareous (such as quartzite, sandstone, or schist), and the soils are more or less acidic. This community is broadly defined and includes examples that may lack pines and are dominated by scrub oak and/or heath shrubs apparently related to fire regime.

Identification Comments

This is a fairly small, plain gray, Geometrid moth with feathered antennae in males.

Characteristics Most Useful for Identification

This is a fairly small, plain gray, Geometrid moth with feathered antennae in males. It is easily identified by anybody familiar with the group. There are no similar species in New York. Northern specimens tend to be smaller and with subdued markings, compared to the specimen illustrated by Covell (1984).

Best Life Stage for Identifying This Species

Adult only.

Behavior

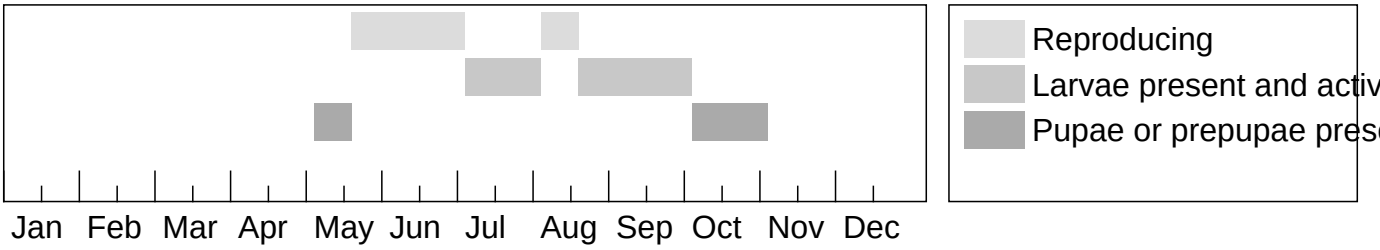
The adults are nocturnal.

Diet

The foodplant has not been documented in New York, but lowbush blueberry (Vaccinium angustifolium and Vaccinium pallidum) are most often reported. Other heaths are probably used as well and Sand Cherry (Prunus pumila) and Pin Cherry (Prunus pensylvanica) are used in New England, which suggests the larvae may be somewhat polyphagous (feeding on many different kinds of food).

The Best Time to See

The phenology is somewhat uncertain, but adults are likely to be present about late May to June and August with two broods. The pupae overwinter in the leaf litter or humus.



The time of year you would expect to find Blueberry Gray in New York.

Taxonomy

Kingdom Animalia
└─ **Phylum** Mandibulates (Mandibulata)
└─ **Class** Insects (Insecta)
└─ **Order** Butterflies, Skippers, and Moths (Lepidoptera)
└─ **Family** Geometridae (Loopers, Span Worms, Inch Worms, Geometer Moths)

Additional Resources

Links

Google Images
http://images.google.com/images?q=GLENA+COGNATARIA

NatureServe Explorer
http://natureserve.org/explorer/servlet/NatureServe?searchName=GLENA+COGNATARIA

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This project is made possible with funding from:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program
- Division of Lands & Forests, Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Information for this guide was last updated on Mar 18, 2013

This guide was authored by