



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Water-willow Stem Borer

Papaipema sulphurata

State Status: **Threatened**

Federal Status: None

Description: The Water-willow Stem Borer is a noctuid moth with forewings that are ochre to straw yellow with purplish-brown shading in the basal and terminal areas; the reniform and orbicular spots are straw yellow, outlined in purplish-brown. The hind wings are pinkish-tan. Wingspan is 32-38 mm.

Habitat: The Water-willow Stem Borer inhabits shallow portions of coastal plain wetlands (swamps, edges of streams and ponds, abandoned cranberry bogs, etc.) where water-willow (*Decodon verticillatus*) grows.

Life History: Adult moths fly in late September and early October. Eggs overwinter, hatching in the spring. Larvae bore into and feed internally on stems of water-willow (*Decodon verticillatus*). Larvae pupate in August.

Range: The Water-willow Stem Borer is endemic to southeastern Massachusetts, occurring in Plymouth and Bristol Counties as well as on Cape Cod and the offshore islands.



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
- Hydrologic alteration
- Invasion by exotic plants
- Insecticide spraying
- Light pollution

