Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

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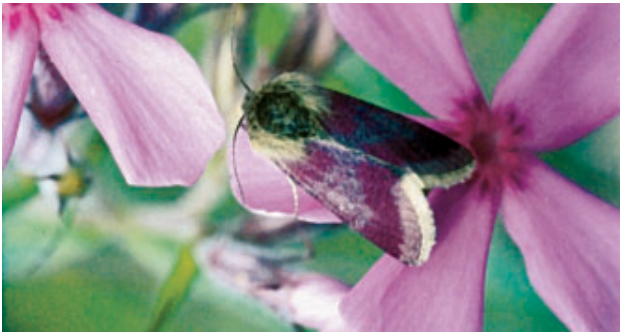
WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Phlox Flower Moth

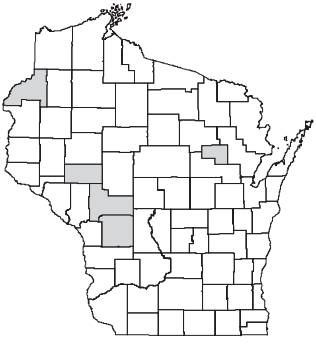
(Schinia indiana)

Federal Status: Not Listed
State Status: Endangered



Description: The phlox flower moth, about 3/4 inch long, is a distinctive pink, day-flying moth about the same color as the downy phlox (*Phlox pilosa*) blossoms on which it rests. Close inspection of phlox blossoms in the cool of the day or on rainy or overcast days may reveal the moths on top of or hanging below the petals. The moths appear wedge-shaped with a lighter band near the outer edge of the wings. Large downy phlox patches hold the best chance of supporting phlox flower moth populations.

Habitat: The phlox flower moth occurs in sandy, scrub oak/pine barrens and prairies, and drier oak savannas, the same habitat in which

Karner blue butterflies and frosted elfin butterflies may be found. The food plant of the phlox flower moth is downy phlox, which thrives in barrens, savannas and along rights-of-way. The adult phlox flower moth lays its eggs on the flower buds of downy phlox; the larvae of the moth feed only on the developing seeds of this plant.

Forestry Considerations: Maintaining openings in oak savanna and jack pine/oak habitats through selective harvest of trees or prescribed burning would benefit the phlox flower moth. Burning should be conducted on no more than a 4- to 5-year rotation with no more than 20% to 25% of the area burned at any one time. If possible, include unplanted dispersal corridors in Christmas tree and other evergreen plantations that otherwise could pose as barriers to dispersal. Spraying of Bt for gypsy moth control will kill phlox flower moth larvae if the spray campaign is conducted while the phlox flower moth is in a susceptible life stage. If possible, avoid spraying sites where the frosted elfin butterfly or phlox flower moth are known to occur, or use gypsy moth-specific toxins.