JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
MAINE FOREST SERVICE
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

Browntail Moth (*Euproctis chrysorrhoea*) Winter Web Survey Protocol
Maine Forest Service, DACF
Forest Health & Monitoring Division

Objective: To monitor the population distribution and intensity of browntail moth populations across the State of Maine.

Justification: The browntail moth (BTM) is an invasive pest first introduced into North America from Europe in the late 1800's. In addition to defoliating hardwood trees including oak, apple, cherry and other fruit tree, this insect poses a serious health concern due to its toxic urticating hairs that can cause a severe rash on, and respiratory distress in, humans. This insect has outbreaks that can last for years before the populations subside to a more endemic level.

Winter web surveys provide a population evaluation in time for individuals or municipalities to plan for controlling BTM in the coming year. Annual roadside winter web surveys have been conducted by the Maine Forest Service since at least 1974 and still being run. The MFS survey are general in nature giving a snapshot of what is seen on major roads. It not comprehensive or designed as a basis for control work. In order for a town to decide if they should undertake any control action for BTM more detailed surveys are needed. This document provides information on how citizens can perform the surveys. This information can be shared with the town, neighbors, and the MFS.

Methods: Webs are most visible January-March. A driver and an observer drive primarily main roads through areas known to be infested with BTM and evaluate the level of webs seen on trees. They then drive further afield looking for BTM until webs are no longer seen. The protocol can also be used for surveying on foot. For towns considering control the same method can be used with more roads driven/walked and evaluated.

Safety is most important. Be careful of impatient drivers behind you and let them pass. Find a safe place to park if closer inspection of a site is required. If handling/pruning webs, use care and destroy webs that are removed.
Do not trespass or remove webs without landowner permission.

Infestations can be spotty so reports from the summer are used as a guide as to where to survey. For example if there is an infestation reported on a back road in a new area then that will be used as a survey starting point for that town. Coastal areas from Kittery to Steuben are checked when populations rise. At endemic levels surveys are kept closer to the infested areas.

Surveys need to be conducted on sunny or mostly sunny days during the middle of the day. The light is critical in seeing the white silk holding the leaves on the trees and as the oaks can retain their leaves all winter it is sometime difficult to determine if they are webs or leaves. Using binoculars can be helpful but snowbanks make safely stopping an issue.

Information recorded:
Type of tree: red oak or apple (this includes crab apple, plum, peach). Webs are primarily in these two.
Pattern of infestation: single tree, patchy or continuous
Number of webs: 0, 1-9, 10-99, 100-499, 500-999, 1000+ (Evaluations can be subjective as it is difficult to quantify the numbers of webs.)
Other information is optional. Use the comments section to describe location, conditions, etc.

March 2017

PATTY CORMIER, DIRECTOR
MAINE FOREST SERVICE
18 ELKINS LANE, HARLOW BUILDING
WWW.MAINEFORESTSERVICE.GOV

PHONE: (207) 287-2791

Date:	Town:	Monitor:

Road name:						
Type of tree:	red oak	apple	crabapple	wild cherry	other fruit	other
Pattern	single tree		patchy		continuous	
Number of trees	1	2	3-5	5-10	11-20	21+
Number of webs	1-9	10-99	100-499	500-999	1000+	
Max. height of webs	<10 ft	10-20 ft	21-30 ft	31-50 ft	51+ ft	
Setting	business	orchard	scrub/old field			
	residence	roadside	woodland			
Latitude:	Notes/comments:					
Longitude:						

Road name:						
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