

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: IILEW0H080

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Sphingicampa raspa*

COMMON NAME: A Royal Moth

SYNONYMS:

FAMILY: Saturniidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Boisduval, 1872.

TYPE LOCALITY: Oaxaca, Mexico. According to NatureServe (2005) this may be erroneous, since no recent material is known between Oaxaca and the United States.

TYPE SPECIMEN:

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: This is a large family with about 1500 species described in 165 genera. There are 8 species in this genus with this species being the only one in Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: The wingspan is 2 5/8 – 3 1/4 in. (6.6-8.2 cm). Females are larger than males. The upperside of the forewing is yellow to gray with a white submedian line and a white diagonal line running from the wing tip to the inner margin. The upperside of the hindwing is red to pink with a whitish postmedian line. These moths do not have hearing organs or tympana.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Similar to *S. albolineata* (Nuelle, 2004 in <http://worldlep.com>).

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color photo (*In* http://nitro.biosci.arizona.edu/zeeb/butterflies/figs/moths/Saturniidae/S_raspa.jpg)
Color photo of larvae (*In* http://nitro.biosci.arizona.edu/zeeb/butterflies/figs/moth_larvae?Saturniidae/S_raspa-1.jpg)
Color photo of female (Robert J. Nuelle, III, August 3, 2004, *in* <http://www.worldlep.com>)

TOTAL RANGE: Southeastern Arizona, Big Bend Area in Texas, and Oaxaca, Mexico.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Southeastern Arizona. Recently (August 3, 2004) photographed in Copper Canyon, Cochise County, where 20+ males and females were observed.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY:

REPRODUCTION: The adults occur in Arizona in late July and early August with a few in the second half of September. The lone Texas record is for late April. The larvae should mature about a month later. Perhaps flight season varies with rainfall. Caterpillars pupate and over winter in chambers in the ground.

FOOD HABITS: The adults are non-feeding and the immatures are herbivores. *Acacia angustissima* (Prairie acacia) is the documented natural food plant, but there could be a few other woody legumes used. Young caterpillars perch on the undersides of petioles and feed on the leaf bases. Older caterpillars cut through petioles partway and bend down the leaves in order to feed on them.

HABITAT: Madrean woodlands with oaks, junipers, legumes, and other woody trees and shrubs. Good density of legume caterpillar food plants must be present. However, according to the USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center the habitat is desert scrub.

ELEVATION:

PLANT COMMUNITY: Madrean woodlands with oaks, junipers, legumes, and other woody trees and shrubs.

POPULATION TRENDS: The actual abundance of individuals is impossible to estimate because there is very little data on which to base it.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None

STATE STATUS: None

OTHER STATUS: None

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Threats are mainly from the lack of targeted management of habitat, threats of fire, and possible small population sizes. It is believed to be relatively resistant.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: None

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Inventory populations to determine conservations status.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: USFS - Coronado National Forest.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

These large moths are not closely related to the true Asiatic silkworm, although largely unsuccessful attempts have been made to utilize commercially the silk from their cocoons.

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