



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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News Release

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Cherry Scallopshell Moths and Tent Caterpillars Found in the Area

Warren, Pa. (June 10, 2016) – Many people have been noticing unusually large numbers of moths this month. Although there are many moths that are native to area forests, the most prevalent on the Allegheny National Forest is the cherry scallopshell moth, a native defoliator that targets black cherry trees. The current cherry scallopshell moth outbreak began in 2014 and usually last 2-3 years. Prior to this outbreak, the last major outbreak took place between 1993 and 1996.

“We have been receiving reports of cherry scallopshell moth populations across most of the eastern half of the Allegheny National Forest,” said Forest Silviculturist Andrea Hille. “We have been monitoring moth populations and anticipate defoliation of many cherry trees in late June into early July.”



Hille said that cherry scallopshell moths will cause bright brown foliage on black cherry trees. “We will continue to monitor this defoliation and the effects of it on overall black cherry crown health,” said Hille. “However, decline and even tree death can occur where repeated defoliations occur in successive years, or where other disturbances are affecting black cherry health,” she said. Hille said that there is help from an unexpected source, as cherry scallopshell moth

populations are naturally controlled by parasitic native wasps that reduce moth outbreaks.

The ANF is working collaboratively with the Forest Service Forest Health Protection Group and the Pennsylvania DCNR’s Division of Forest Health. “We are working together to monitor defoliation activity and the extent of the defoliation,” said Bill Oldland, an entomologist with the FS Forest Health Protection Group.



The other native invasive species that has shown up this year are eastern tent caterpillars. Scattered eastern tent caterpillar nests have been found across much of the ANF. When fully grown, an eastern tent caterpillar is about 2 inches long, black with a white stripe along the middle of the back and a row of pale blue oval spots on each side and is sparsely covered with fine light brown hairs. These caterpillars will eat all the leaves, weakening, though seldom killing a tree.

Hille has requested that anyone who sees a large number of cherry scalloped moths or caterpillar nests within the forest boundaries to contact her with the general location and what you observed. She can be reached at ahille@fs.fed.us or by calling 814.728.6100.



For more information:

Cherry scalloped moth:

http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/cssm/cherry_scallop_shell_moth.htm.

Eastern tent caterpillars: http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/etc/etc.htm

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