

The Ohio Lepidopterists Gypsy Moth Control Position Statement

The Ohio Lepidopterists has adopted the position held by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife to wit: "We are concerned by potential impact of widespread treatment with Dimilin or *Bacillus thuringiensis* for gypsy moth suppression on non-target organisms. We will continue to support efforts to promote the use of Gypchek, the fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga*, and measures to educate the public concerning the inevitable range expansion of the gypsy moth through Ohio and the pros and cons of chemical treatment.

While we are interested in minimizing the loss of oak and hickory component for Ohio's forest, we do not believe chemical controls for gypsy moths will achieve this goal. Furthermore, based on the temporal and spatial persistence of this moth we do not believe it can be eliminated from Ohio with techniques presently available."

Rationale: Gypsy moths (*Lymantria dispar*) are increasing in numbers in Ohio. Some governmental units are increasingly under pressure to control gypsy moth expansion by chemical measures. Whereas most pest species occur in agricultural or other specialized habitats which do not support a full array of native insects including butterflies and moths, gypsy moths occur in native forest habitats with a full compliment of native species.

Insects are an important part of the food chain, and they are the primary food source of most game fish and nearly all forest birds. The most effective chemical control measures for gypsy moths are lethal to nearly all species of insects, especially butterflies and moths. The environmental damage from nonselective spraying must be carefully compared to the realistic losses caused by gypsy moths. The economic and environmental value of insects lost should also be considered. Spray applications should be designed to ensure natural reproduction by native species and protect non-target species.

Butterflies and moths are an important part of Ohio's wildlife in the eyes of the public. Their natural beauty brings pleasure to a great many Ohio residents. Butterflies and moths offer far more than their aesthetic appeal. A number of Ohio's butterfly and moth species occupy unique or rare habitats, and they are important first indicators of such habitats and any environmental change that may occur within them. Some butterfly and moth species are state listed as endangered or threatened. We have a moral obligation to protect such species from needless human destruction.

The Ohio Lepidopterists urges anyone considering gypsy moth control to be aware of the potential effects on native wildlife and to institute gypsy moth control measures only in a manner that will insure adequate protection of native butterflies and moths. Biological control measures that minimize impacts to non-target species should be used.

The Ohio Lepidopterists, which is actively engaged in studying and monitoring butterflies in Ohio, urges research to collect credible comprehensive baseline data across the state. The Ohio

Lepidopterists is available to share its information and expertise on all topics concerning Ohio's butterflies and moths.

Adopted by The Ohio Lepidopterists February 18, 2001 David K. Parshall, President