



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
MAINE FOREST SERVICE – FOREST HEALTH & MONITORING  
PO Box 415  
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February 16, 2018

The Maine Forest Service has surveyed for browntail moth for decades and alerted towns when populations are high enough to impact residents. Over the past several years, browntail moth populations have been increasing, and the footprint of impact expanding. This letter is to inform towns expected to have the highest impacts from this insect in 2018 and allow towns and property owners time to survey their land and decide if they need to take measures against the browntail moth. Many of your residents and visitors will feel the impact of browntail moth this spring and summer. Please help them to limit exposure by sharing information about this pest.

A combination of defoliation records, public inquiries and staff observations indicate that populations are high or very high in **parts of Bath, Boothbay, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Brunswick, Cumberland, Dresden, Edgcomb, Falmouth, Freeport, Harpswell, Perkins Twp. Swans Island, Richmond, Topsham, West Bath, Westport Island, Wiscasset, Woolwich and Yarmouth.** Other towns may be similarly affected or may have populations approaching high levels.

For those who are unfamiliar with browntail, the hairs of the larvae (caterpillars) cause a rash like poison ivy and can also cause respiratory distress in sensitive individuals. The hairs can continue to cause problems for several years when they are stirred up during activities such as mowing, raking or sweeping. The caterpillars eat the leaves of oak, apple and other hardwood trees from May to early July and can cause branch dieback and may eventually kill the tree.

Browntail moth adults fly in July and lay their eggs on host trees. The eggs hatch in August and tiny -1/8" - caterpillars eat by scraping off the outside layer of the underside of leaves before they make overwintering webs. Winter webs are most visible after leaf fall, and until leaf expansion. They are a valuable tool for gauging how bad the browntail situation will be in the spring.

Below is a link to the Maine Forest Service browntail moth website with more information including:

[http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest\\_health/invasive\\_threats/browntail\\_moth\\_info.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm)

- Description of the browntail and how to control it,
- What the overwintering webs look like and how to remove them,
- A list of arborists offering web-clipping services,
- A list of Licensed Pesticide Applicators for landowners to contact now about potential control work in the spring

Additional information on State Law specific to browntail can be found at:

- Towns can declare browntail a public health nuisance  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec1444.html>
- Browntail control near tidal waters  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/ros/LOM/LOM122nd/15Pub551-600/Pub551-600-02.htm>

The Maine CDC has resources related to human health and browntail moth:

[www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/browntail-moth/index.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/browntail-moth/index.shtml)

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The following is a list of some of the actions a town can undertake to respond to the presence of browntail moth:

- Post information and directly notify the population - in town office, library, on website, in newsletter, through the school systems, on social media
- Host an informational session on browntail - libraries, garden clubs, conservation committees are valuable in helping to organize these sessions
- Declare browntail a public health nuisance - allows towns more flexibility in treatment options
- Form a browntail committee – to research the issue and advise town officials
- Assist in coordinating browntail control for property owners
- Treat public properties, coordinate with school district to treat school properties and playing fields

The Maine Forest Service is working with

- the Vector Borne Working Group on the health effects of browntail and developing information on this aspect of the outbreak
- Pesticide Control on control options
- The University of Maine looking at additional control possibilities
- individual Licensed Pesticide Applicators who are exploring novel approaches to control

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allison Kanoti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Allison" and last name "Kanoti" clearly distinguishable.

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