Species Status Assessment

Common Name: Uncommon Oak Moth **Date Updated:** March 2025

Scientific Name: *Phoberia ingenua* **Minor Edits by:** NYSDEC Wildlife Section

Class: Insecta

Family: Erebidae

Species Synopsis *(a short paragraph which describes species taxonomy, distribution, recent trends, and habitat in New York):*

A recent review of this species has revised the taxonomic name to *Phoberia ingenua* (Lafontaine et al. 2009). This species is widespread throughout eastern North America. East of the Great Plains, it spans from Albany, NY to northern Florida and west of the Great Plains in Colorado. It occurs very spottily in distribution, and is known from only one or two locations in many states were it does occur (D. Lafontaine, personal communication). This species is common within the New Jersey Pine Barrens and the central Wisconsin Barrens (NatureServe 2012). Limited information exists regarding the distribution, population trend and life cycle of *P. ingenua*. The preferred habitat is sand hills with scrubby oak (*Quercus sp.*) (D. Lafontaine, personal communication). In New York, suitable habitat can be found in the Albany Pine Bush and on Long Island. Minimal records exist regarding occurrences within New York or in the Northeast. *P. ingenua* occurs within the Upper Hudson River Valley and Lower Hudson-Long Island Bay Basin; however there is no specific recording for the location/county of populations. Larval foodplants consist of a variety of oak species (*Quercus spp.*). Future monitoring and research is needed to better assess this species.

DEC is not aware of any additional data or new information on population trends or threats to this species since the last SWAP revision in 2015. This species was listed as SPCN in 2015, but with the removal of this status in the 2025 revision it has been changed to SGCN.

I. Status

a. Current legal protected Status

i. **Federal:** Not listed **Candidate:** No

ii. **New York:** Not listed

b. Natural Heritage Program

i. **Global:** G3G4

ii. **New York:** S2S3 **Tracked by NYNHP?:** Watchlist

Other Ranks:

-NYS 2025 SGCN Status: SGCN

-IUCN Red List:

-Northeast Regional SGCN: Watchlist

Status Discussion:

This species currently occurs within the Upper Hudson River Valley and Lower Hudson-Long Island Bays basin (NYSDEC 2005). Presumably, with increased monitoring more specific locations and populations could be identified within the Albany Pine Bush and/or Long Island areas. This species is listed as imperiled in New York and vulnerable in Pennsylvania (NatureServe 2012).

II. Abundance and Distribution Trends

Region	Present?	Abundance	Distribution	Time Frame	Listing status	SGCN?
North America	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			
Northeastern US	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			
New York	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			Yes
Connecticut	No					
Massachusetts	No data					
New Jersey	No					
Pennsylvania	No data					
Vermont	No					
Ontario	No					
Quebec	No					

Column options
Present?: Yes; No; Unknown; No data; (blank) or Choose an Item
Abundance and Distribution: Declining; Increasing; Stable; Unknown; Extirpated; N/A; (blank) or Choose an item
SGCN?: Yes; No; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item

Monitoring in New York *(specify any monitoring activities or regular surveys that are conducted in New York):*

Intermittent surveys of New York's pine barren communities have been conducted

Trends Discussion *(insert map of North American/regional distribution and status):*

There is no information regarding the population trends of *P. ingenua* in North America or New York. This species is widespread throughout eastern North America east of the Great Plains from Albany, NY to northern Florida and west of the Great Plains in Colorado (D. Lafontaine, personal communication).

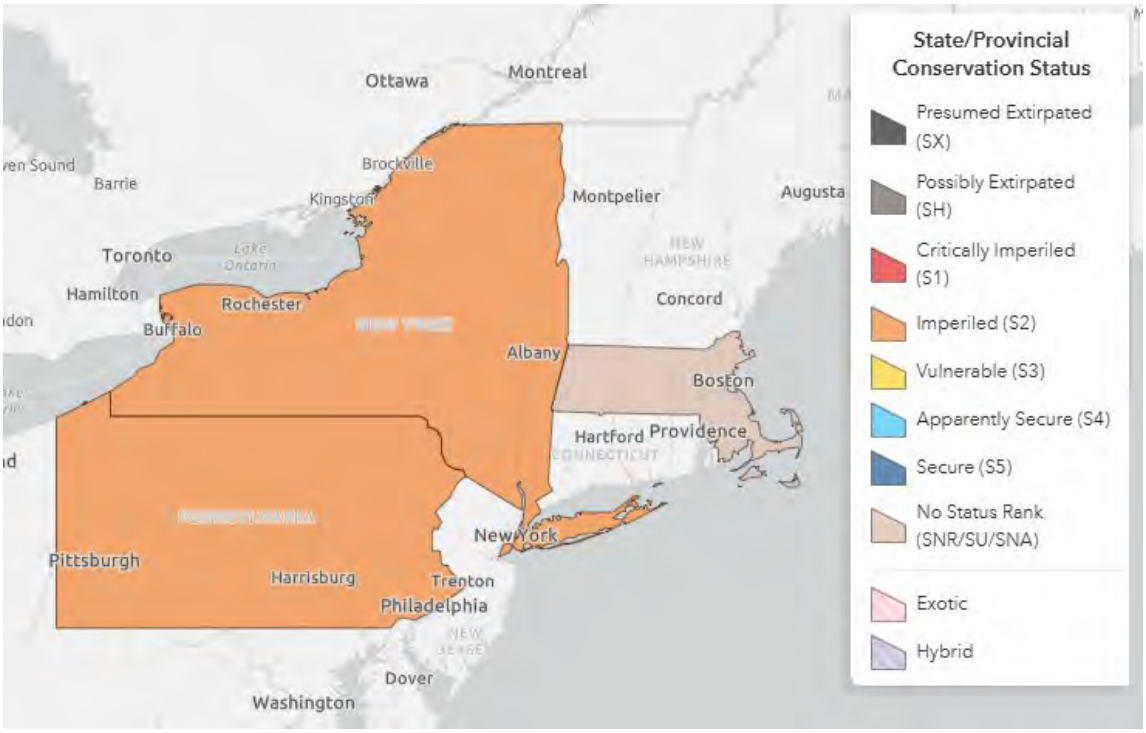

Figure 1. Conservation status of *phoberia ingenua* in North America (NatureServe 2025).

III. New York Rarity *(provide map, numbers, and percent of state occupied)*

Details of historic and current occurrence:

No historic occurrence information available.

This species is currently occurring in the Upper Hudson River Valley and Lower Hudson-Long Island Bays Basin (NYSDEC 2005).

New York's Contribution to Species North American Range:

Percent of North American Range in NY	Classification of NY Range	Distance to core population, if not in NY
1-25%	Peripheral	

Column options
Percent of North American Range in NY: 100% (endemic); 76-99%; 51-75%; 26-50%; 1-25%; 0%; Choose an item
Classification of NY Range: Core; Peripheral; Disjunct; (blank) or Choose an item

IV. Primary Habitat or Community Type *(from NY crosswalk of NE Aquatic, Marine, or Terrestrial Habitat Classification Systems):*

a. Pine Barrens

b. Oak-Pine Forest

Habitat or Community Type Trend in New York

Habitat Specialist?	Indicator Species?	Pollinator Species?	Habitat/ Community Trend	Time frame of Decline/Increase
Yes	No	-	Declining	

Column options
Habitat Specialist, Indicator Species and Pollinator Species: Yes; No; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item
Habitat/Community Trend: Declining; Stable; Increasing; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item

Habitat Discussion:

Phoberia ingenua can be found in dry sandplain pitch pine-scub oak barrens and possibly in open pine-oak woodland (Wagner et al. 2003). This species preferred habitat is sand hills with scrubby oaks (D. Lafontaine, personal communication).

V. Species Demographic, and Life History:

Breeder in NY?	Non-breeder in NY?	Migratory Only?	Summer Resident?	Winter Resident?	Anadromous/ Catadromous?
Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-

Column options
First 5 fields: Yes; No; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item
Anadromous/Catadromous: Anadromous; Catadromous; (blank) or Choose an item

Species Demographics and Life History Discussion *(include information about species life span, reproductive longevity, reproductive capacity, age to maturity, and ability to disperse and colonize):*

Larvae use a variety of oak species (*Quercus spp.*) as a host plant, including scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*) (Wagner et al. 2003).

VI. Threats *(from NY 2015 SWAP or newly described):*

Although there are no specific locations for the historic/current occurrences in New York, there is suitable habitat in the Albany Pine Bush and on Long Island. Habitat fragmentation within these two areas could be a threat to this species though large parcels are managed and protected (Wagner et al. 2003). General threats identified to affect moth species include habitat loss and degradation caused by development; alteration of natural fire regimes; natural succession of shrubland, woodland, and barrens habitats; land clearing; coastal erosion; and sea level rise. Past use of chemical biocides to control gypsy moth and other pest insects continues to kill native Lepidoptera (Schweitzer 2004). Introduced parasitoid flies have been known to negatively affect native Lepidoptera (Boettner et al. 2000). Other threats may include invasive species, light pollution affecting reproductive success, over grazing of host plants by wild deer populations, and off-road vehicle use (NYSDEC 2005).

Threat Level 1	Threat Level 2	Threat Level 3	Spatial Extent	Severity	Immediacy	Trend	Certainty
1. Residential and Commercial	1.1 Housing & Urban Areas	(habitat loss)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
6. Human Intrusions & Disturbance	6.1 Recreational Activities	6.1.1 Motor vehicles	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
7. Natural System Modifications	7.1 Fire & Fire Suppression	7.1.2 Suppression in the fire regime	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
8. Invasive & Other Problematic Species	8.1 Invasive Non-Native Plants & Animals	8.1.1 Terrestrial animals (parasitoid flies)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
8. Invasive & Other Problematic Species	8.2 Problematic Native Plants & Animals	(over-grazing by deer)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
9. Pollution	9.6 Excess Energy	9.6.1 Light pollution	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
11. Climate Change	11.1 Habitat Shifting & Alteration		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Table 1. Threats to *Phoberia ingenua*

Are there regulatory mechanisms that protect the species or its habitat in New York?

Yes: _____ **No:** _X_ **Unknown:** _____

If yes, describe mechanism and whether adequate to protect species/habitat:

Describe knowledge of management/conservation actions that are needed for recovery/conservation, or to eliminate, minimize, or compensate for the identified threats:

Future monitoring and research of *P. ingenua* is required to assess threats facing New York populations as well as its status in the state.

Action Category	Action	Description
A.1 Direct Habitat Management	A.1.0.0.0 Direct habitat management	Site/Area management
A.1 Direct Habitat Management	A.1.1.0.0 Manage plants, animals, fungi, or bacteria	Invasive/Problematic species control
B.3 Outreach	B.3.1.4.0 Public outreach and information	Awareness & Communications
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.5.0.0 Conservation planning	Site/Area Protection
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.5.0.0 Conservation planning	Resource/Habitat Protection
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.1.3.0 Create, amend, or influence regulation	
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.2.1.0 Create or amend policies	
C.9 Education and Training	C.9.2.0.0 Training and individual skill development	Training

Table 2. Recommended conservation actions for *Phoberia ingenua* (add more lines as needed).

The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (NYSDEC 2005) includes recommendations for the following actions for other moths, and for *Phoberia ingenua* in particular.

Easement acquisition:
____ Where appropriate, acquire easements to promote moth protection and conservation.
Fact sheet:
____ Create fact sheets covering moths.
Habitat management:
____ Determine best management regime for moth species, including fire and other forms of management.
Habitat monitoring:
____ Develop standardized measures of habitat parameters for each species of listed moth.
____ Investigate threats to food and host plants.
____ Monitor land development projects.
Habitat research:
____ Examine role of light pollution as threat to moths.
____ Determine host/ food plant.
Life history research:
____ Investigate the metapopulation dynamics of those species which warrant it.
____ Examine role of introduced parasites and predators in threats to moths.
Other action:
____ Develop standard definition of what is needed for "viable" populations of moths.
____ Research the role of pesticide use in threats to moths.
Population monitoring:
____ Inventory of species within historical range.
____ Develop standardized survey protocols for moths.
Private fee acquisition:
____ Where appropriate, encourage/assist private entities to acquire land for moth protection and conservation.
State fee acquisition:
____ Where appropriate, acquire land essential to moth protection and conservation.
State land unit management plan:
____ Incorporate needs of moths into state land management plans.

VII. References

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Experts Consulted: Don Lafontaine

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