

# Species Status Assessment

**Common Name:** Scribble sallow

**Date Updated:** October 17, 2024

**Scientific Name:** *Sympistis perscripta*

**Updated By:** Annie Stupik

**Class:** Insecta

**Family:** Noctuidae

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

The scribble sallow is currently known as *Sympistis perscripta*. It has been reclassified from the genus *Lepipolys* (Troubridge 2008). The distribution of this poorly known moth is thought to span spottily from southern Maine to Florida, westward through Minnesota, Colorado, and Arizona to California, but information on its distribution in the United States and Canada is incomplete (Wagner et al. 2011). Likewise, little is known about the distribution of scribbled sallow moths in New York. It is thought to be confined to Long Island and neighboring islands (Schweitzer 1998). Populations from Texas westward have different larvae and habitats than the eastern populations (Wagner et al. 2011). There are four known occurrences in the state. Three occurrences (1954, 1997, and 2015) are from Suffolk County (New York Nature Explorer 2009, NYNHP 2024) and the most recent record was in 2022 from Nassau County (NYNHP 2024). While little is known about the species, it occurs erratically in sandy areas with sparse vegetation and grasses, including dunes, rocky outcrops, and waste lots. Larvae are typically found on stems of the foodplant, old-field toadflax (*Nuttallanthus canadensis*) (New York Heritage Program 2011).

## I. Status

### a. Current legal protected Status

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

ii. **New York:** Not listed; HPSGCN

### b. Natural Heritage Program

i. **Global:** G4

ii. **New York:** S1 **Tracked by NYNHP?:** yes

### Other Ranks:

-IUCN Red List: not listed

-Northeast Regional SGCN: not listed

### Status Discussion:

*Sympistis perscripta* occurs across North America but is uncommon throughout its known range. More information is to accurately assess population trends.

## II. Abundance and Distribution Trends

Region	Present?	Abundance	Distribution	Time Frame	Listing status	SGCN?
<b>North America</b>	Yes	(blank)	(blank)			-
<b>Northeastern US</b>	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			(blank)
<b>New York</b>	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			Yes
<b>Connecticut</b>	Yes	Unknown	Unknown		Special concern	Yes
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			No
<b>New Jersey</b>	Yes	Unknown	Unknown			No
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	No data	(blank)	(blank)			No
<b>Vermont</b>	No data	(blank)	(blank)			No
<b>Ontario</b>	No data	(blank)	(blank)			No
<b>Quebec</b>	No data	(blank)	(blank)			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

There are no known monitoring activities being conducted for this species.

### Trends Discussion

Short-term and long-term population trends for this species in New York are unknown.

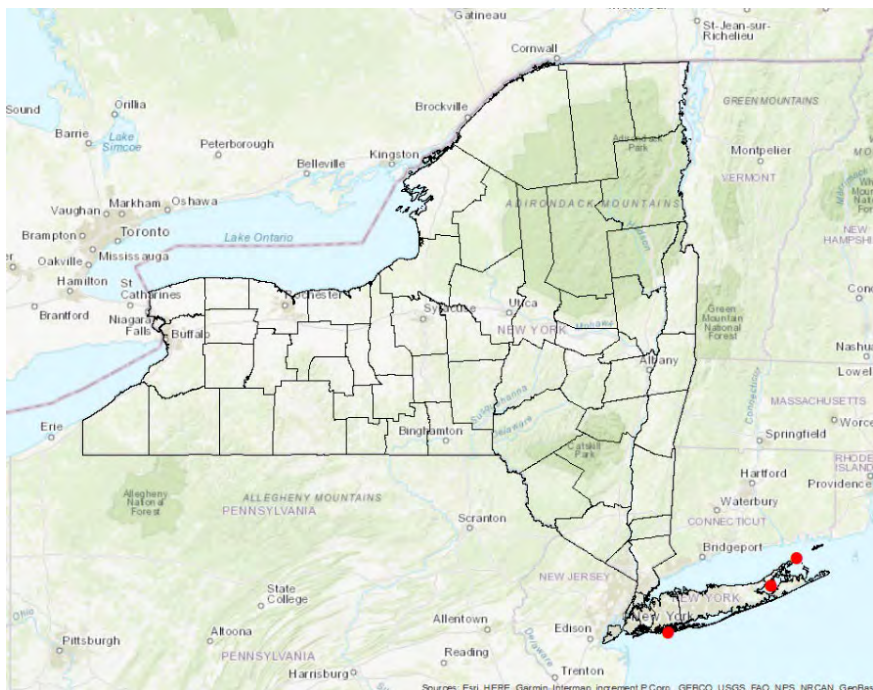
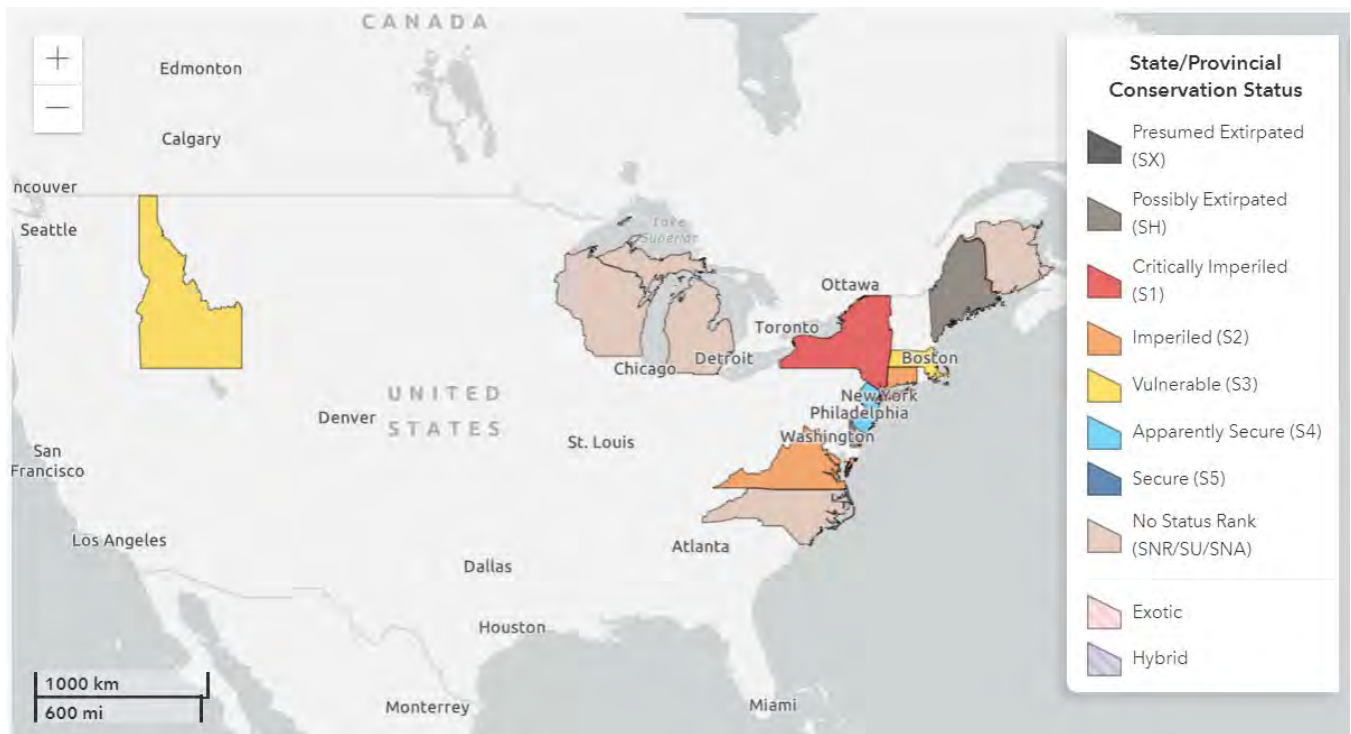


Figure 1. *Sympistis perscripta* occurrences in New York (NYNHP, 2024).



**Figure 2.** *Sympistis perscripta* distribution and status (Distribution may not be complete. NatureServe, 2024)

### III. New York Rarity

Years	# of Records	# of Distinct Waterbodies/Locations	% of State
Pre-2000	2	1	<1
2000- 2023	2	2	<1

**Table 1.** Records of *Sympistis perscripta* in New York.

#### Details of historic and current occurrence:

This species was documented in Suffolk County in 1954, 1997, and 2015, and in Nassau County in 2022.

#### 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%	Core	

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. Maritime Dune
- b. Erosional Bluff

**Habitat or Community Type Trend in New York**

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

Sand and grassy plains, dunes, rocky outcrops, waste lots and other open xeric habitats (Wagner 2008). In New York, this species inhabits the sandy beaches and bluffs of Suffolk County. These moths occur in larval foodplant patches of old-field toadflax. Low number of occurrences and lack of data require further research to accurately assess preferred habitat of this species (New York Natural Heritage Program 2011).

**V. Species Demographic, and Life History:**

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

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):

Larva feed on buds, flower and seeds of toadflax species especially old-field toadflax. Adults occur from April to early June in New Jersey. Adults have been seen as late as August in Long Island. In the eastern United States, the larval foodplant expires by midsummer. Pupae overwinter in underground cocoons (Wagner et al. 2008). *S. perscripta* has been documented to have one annual generation, but could possibly have a second generation. Larvae are present and active in New York during early June to early July. Reproduction occurs from July until early September (Wagner et al. 2011). *S. perscripta* are probably good colonizers, given most individual occurrences are found up to 100 km from any suitable habitat (NatureServe 2012). Further research on the life history is needed, including timing of larval stage, pupal stage, and flight season (New York Natural Heritage Program 2011).

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

Direct threats to *S. perscripta* are uncertain. Probable threats affecting populations are loss and fragmentation of suitable habitat due to commercial and residential development. Because of its

close association with old-field toadflax, this moth can be limited by the availability of this plant (New York Natural Heritage Program 2011). More research is needed to further assess this species' trends and other potential threats.

General threats identified to affect moth species include habitat loss and degradation caused by development; habitat fragmentation; alteration of natural fire regimes; natural succession of shrubland, woodland, and barrens habitats; and land clearing. Past use of chemical biocides to control spongy 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 2015).

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.
1. Residential and Commercial	1.2 Commercial & Industrial 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 (offroad)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
7. Natural System Modifications	7.1 Fire & Fire Suppression	-	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
7. Natural System Modifications	7.3 Other Ecosystem Modifications	7.3.2 Vegetation succession	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	8.2.3 Localized increase in invertebrate grazing	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
9. Pollution	9.3 Agricultural & Forestry Effluents	9.3.3 Herbicides & pesticides (spongy moth pesticides)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

**Table 2.** Threats to *Sympistis perscripta*.

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

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: ü 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:**

More research is needed to further assess this species' trends and other potential threats.

Action Category	Action	Description
A.1 Direct Habitat Management	A.1.0.0.0 Direct Habitat Management	Site Management
A.2 Direct Species Management	A.2.0.0.0 Direct Species Management	Invasive/problematic species control
B.3 Outreach	B.3.0.0.0 Outreach	Awareness and Communications
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.0.0.0 Design and Plan Conservation	Site/Area Protection
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.0.0.0 Design and Plan Conservation	Resource/Habitat Protection
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.0.0.0 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	Policies and Regulations

**Table 3.** Recommended conservation actions for *S. perscripta*

## VII. References

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<b>Originally prepared by</b>	Shawn Ferdinand
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