

SAVE OUR BIRDS - Take Down Your Feeders

As we head into fall and winter, social distancing is not just going to be important for humans. Conjunctivitis has been found affecting birds as far north as Pennsylvania. Avian conjunctivitis causes swelling and irritation of the eyes, which can lead to blindness. Once they become blind, they can no longer find food and quickly succumb. Conjunctivitis is transmitted when birds congregate at feeders and baths, and can also be transmitted through contaminated seeds. This is affecting blue jay, starlings, robins and grackle the hardest.

Wildlife professionals are urging you to please take your feeders and baths in now to help prevent the spread of the disease. Removing feeders while birds still have a lot of vegetation to feast on will minimize impacts from the loss of this food source. Once removed, clean your feeders and birdbaths with a 10% bleach solution to ensure they do not contain the bacteria that causes this disease.

If you see birds with crusty eyes, staggering, falling over, or trembling, please report them to mass.wildlife@mass.gov.

As our feathered friends are travelling through your backyards to their wintering locations, please do your part to help ensure they can find their way.

Potential New Invasive Species: Box Tree Moth



The Box Tree Moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*, is a moth native to Asia that has spread to Europe and Canada. Recently a nursery in Canada shipped boxwood plants that may have been infested with box tree moth to seven US states, including Massachusetts. They can produce several generations between June and October, which makes urgent action essential to prevent this pest from establishing itself in Massachusetts.

Box tree moths feed on the leaves and bark of boxwood shrubs and can cause complete defoliation. If the damage is contained only to defoliation, most boxwoods will recover. However, death can occur when the caterpillars consume the bark, girdling the plant. While state and federal inspectors have not found any signs of box tree moths at the nurseries, state officials warn that some of the plants may have been sold before inspections began, or were purchased out of state and planted in Massachusetts.

Box Tree Moth, continued

We ask that you **inspect your boxwood plants** for all of the life stages of this pest: eggs, caterpillars, pupae, and adults. Eggs are typically laid in gelatinous masses on the underside of boxwood leaves. Caterpillars can grow up to 1.5 inches long, are yellowish green with a black head, and have long black stripes and spots that reach from the head to the end of the body. When they are ready to morph into adult moths, they form small green pupae. Adults typically have white wings with a dark brown border, but can sometimes be all brown with just a small white streak on each wing.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is urging anyone who may have purchased boxwood shrubs this spring to check the plants for signs of the moth and report any findings to <https://massnrc.org/pests/report.aspx> or by calling 617-626-1779.

For more information, please visit: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/plant-health/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/sa_insects/box-tree-moth