

Blackburn sphinx moth

Blackburn's Sphinx Moth

Generated June 06, 2026 04:45 AM UTC, IPaC v6.128.29-rc1



Blackburn's sphinx moth (*Manduca blackburni*):

Adult Blackburn's sphinx moths feed on nectar from native plants, including beach morning glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*), iliee (*Plumbago zeylanica*), and maiapilo (*Capparis sandwichiana*); larvae feed upon non-native tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) and native aiea (*Nothocestrum* sp.). To pupate, the larvae burrow into the soil and can remain in a state of torpor for a year or more before emerging from the soil. Soil disturbance can result in death of the pupae.

We offer the following survey recommendations to assess whether the Blackburn's sphinx moth is within the project area:

- A biologist familiar with the species should survey areas of proposed activities for Blackburn's sphinx moth and its larval host plants prior to work initiation.
 - Surveys should be conducted during the wettest portion of the year (usually November-April or several weeks after a significant rain) and within 4-6 weeks prior to construction.
 - Surveys should include searches for eggs, larvae, and signs of larval feeding (chewed stems, frass, or leaf damage).
 - If native aiea or tree tobacco over 3 feet tall, or adult Blackburn's sphinx moths are found during surveys, do not disturb them and contact the Service for additional guidance to avoid take.

If no Blackburn's sphinx moth, aiea, or tree tobacco are found during surveys, it is imperative that measures be taken to avoid attraction of Blackburn's sphinx moth to the project location and prohibit tree tobacco from entering the site. Tree tobacco can grow greater than 3 feet tall in approximately 6 weeks. If it grows over 3 feet after surveys have been completed, the plants may become a host plant for Blackburn's sphinx moth larvae. We therefore recommend that you:

- Remove any tree tobacco less than 3 feet tall.
- Monitor the site every 4-6 weeks for new tree tobacco growth before, during, and after the proposed ground-disturbing activity. This monitoring for can be completed by any staff, such as groundskeeper or regular maintenance crew, if they are provided with picture placards of tree tobacco at different life stages.