

# Kern Primrose Sphinx Moth

## A Threatened Insect at Carrizo Plain National Monument

At the right time of year, the Kern primrose sphinx moth (*Euproserpinus euterpe*) can be found flying along dry washes in the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The only other known location where this species survives is the Walker Basin northeast of Bakersfield. It has been listed as a “threatened” species under the federal Endangered Species Act, meaning that it is in danger of becoming extinct and making it illegal to harm the species or its habitat.



Paul Johnson

### Life cycle

The adult moths emerge from their underground pupae to fly in late winter or spring, depending on the weather. They are found near dry washes where their foodplant grows. The female moth lays her eggs near the foodplants, which the larvae locate and eat. The adults do not eat plants but may drink nectar.

At each stage of development, the larva grows larger. The markings on the larva develop into an intricate black, orange, green, yellow, and brown pattern. The larva finally forms a pupa

underground in late spring. The adult moth emerges from the pupa early the next year to repeat the cycle.

### Threats

Anything that harms the moth’s foodplant also harms the moth, such as trampling and



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replacement by nonnative weeds. The Carrizo Plain National Monument, with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is protecting habitat of the moth by excluding livestock, vehicles, bicycles, and foot traffic during critical periods of the moth’s development.



Travis Longcore

### What you can do

To help the Kern primrose sphinx moth you can take some simple steps. Do not pick wildflowers — and try not to step on them. Drive your vehicle only on designated roads and trails, never off-road anywhere in the Monument. Respect signs to keep out of restricted areas, and report violators to a Ranger at (661) 391-6000. Especially avoid dry washes when in a vehicle, or on horseback or a bicycle.

Carrizo Plain National Monument is administered and managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy, and the California Department of Fish and Game. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided funding for The Urban Wildlands Group to produce this bulletin.