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2023 Army Cutworm Research, Owyhee County, Idaho

I'll be looking for army cutworm larvae and the cheatgrass die-offs they can create in Owyhee County again this spring. Please let me know if you see either larvae or bare areas.

Army cutworm outbreaks and die-offs seem to appear after:

1. a year of dry weather through summer,
2. fall cheatgrass germination,
3. a big flight of adult moths in October, and
4. a dry winter through January.

*A major army cutworm outbreak seems **unlikely** this spring, but the larvae have to be somewhere every year. Please keep an eye out for them.*

Details:

1. Dry prior year? **No.** Grand View got over twice as much precipitation from September 2021 to August 2022 as during the corresponding periods before the 2003 and 2014 outbreaks.
2. Fall germination? **No.** I didn't see any cheatgrass germinate by last October; please tell me if you saw some.
3. Big moth flight? **Sort of.** Last October, for the third year in a row, I trapped 50% more adult moths returning to lay eggs than I did the previous year. **However**, this is still only 15% of the number I trapped before the 2014 outbreak (I didn't trap moths before the 2003 outbreak).
4. Dry winter? **Not really.** Grand View got over 50% more precipitation (2.2 inches) October through January this winter as it did the winters before the 2003 and 2014 outbreaks and die-offs.

Thank you!

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WANTED: Army cutworms



Please tell me if you see:

- Larvae hiding under cow pies during the day, through May.
- Larvae feeding on seedlings or shrubs, most often at night.
- Bare areas where you usually see cheatgrass, through summer.