Euphyes bayensis Shuey, 1989
Bay Skipper
(Hesperiidae: Hesperiinae)

SUMMARY

The Bay Skipper lives only in tidal sawgrass marshes in Mississippi and Texas. Little is known about this recently discovered species. Although it is likely to be found at other sawgrass marshes along the Gulf coast, the lack of records from adjacent states suggests that it does have a limited range, and there is no doubt that this species is very rare. Because of its rarity and its use of coastal salt marsh habitat, over collection, natural disasters, and mosquito spraying are all potential threats.

CONSERVATION STATUS
Xerces Red List Status: Vulnerable
Other Rankings:
- Canada – Species at Risk Act: N/A
- Canada – provincial status: N/A
- Mexico: N/A
- USA – Endangered Species Act: None
- USA – state status: None
- NatureServe: G1G3
- IUCN Red List: N/A

SPECIES PROFILE

DESCRIPTION
The Bay Skipper is a small butterfly in the family Hesperiidae. Its wingspan is 37 to 44 mm (1½ to 1¾ inches).

The upperside of the males is black with a large orange patch on each wing. The forewing has a prominent black stigma. The females are dark brown with yellow spots on the forewing and a yellow streak on the hindwing. The underside is brown (paler than the
female upperside) with pale yellow spots on the forewing and two obvious yellow streaks running from the base to the margin.

The bay skipper is very similar to the Dion Skipper (Euphyes dion), but the upperside of the wings is brighter orange and the black borders are narrower.

**TAXONOMIC STATUS**

*Euphyes bayensis* Shuey, 1989. Also known as the Bay St. Louis Skipper. Scientists still need to review the entire *E. dion* complex, but the taxon of *E. bayensis* is mostly recognized. However, some scientists remain skeptical. *E. bayensis* and *E. dion* are sympatric, but occupy different habitats, at least in Mississippi.

**LIFE HISTORY**

The Bay Skipper appears to live only in tidal sawgrass marsh. Larval hostplant is unconfirmed but is probably sawgrass (*Cladium* sp).

There are two distinct flight periods, in late May and September. The separation between these suggests that the larvae may aestivate between the two, as well as hibernate during the winter. Both aestivation and hibernation are done as larvae, probably in the third or fourth instar.

**DISTRIBUTION**

Bay Skipper has been recorded on coastal marshes in Mississippi and Texas. Although it is likely to be discovered at other sawgrass marshes along the Gulf coast, the lack of records from other states suggests that it does have a limited range.

**THREATS**

Because this species was only recently discovered, little is known about threats. However, because of its rarity and its use of coastal salt marsh habitat, over collection, natural disasters, and mosquito spraying are all potential threats.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

Although the distribution is uncertain, there is no doubt that this species is very rare. Any species with such a restricted range and small number of populations is vulnerable to extirpation.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS**

Sawgrass marshes should be conserved and protected from disturbance (for example, mosquito spraying).

**RESEARCH NEEDS**

Additional surveys along the Gulf coast to identify other populations would be useful, as would life history studies. Currently, very little is known about this species. Careful documentation of the known habitat and identification of larval hostplant(s) and adult feeding behavior would be valuable.
RESOURCES

CONTACTS

REFERENCES


WEBSITES
U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center; The Butterflies of North America: Bay Skipper.
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Nearctica; The Butterflies and Skippers of North America: Bay Skipper.
http://www.nearctica.com/butter/plate30/Ebayen.htm
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NatureServe Explorer.
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RED LIST OF POLLINATOR INSECTS
Species profile: *Euphyes bayensis*, Bay Skipper

**DISTRIBUTION MAP**
(From USGS North Prairie Wildlife Research Center. 

Species profile: *Euphyes bayensis*, Bay Skipper