

Arogos Skipper, *Atrytone arogos arogos*

Status:

State: Endangered

Federal: Not listed

Identification

Arogos skippers range in size from 1.13 in. to 1.4 in. (35-41 mm) and look very similar to the more abundant Delaware skipper (*Anatrytone logan*). Both species have a light orange base color with black wing margins on their upper surface, but the margins on the arogos tend to be slightly thicker than those of the Delaware skipper. The white fringe on the underside of the arogos skipper's hindwing and deeper orange coloration



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on the under surface of the wings are also useful characteristics to help naturalists distinguish between the two species. Because differentiating between arogos skippers and Delaware skippers can be difficult, readers should refer to the field guides by Opler and Malikul (1998) and Glassberg (1999) for additional help with identification.

Habitat

The habitat requirements for this species vary regionally, even within the state. Northern populations inhabit xeric to dry-mesic grasslands dominated by its host plant, little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparius*). Little bluestem communities typically occur in abandoned agricultural fields, derelict parking lots, abandoned gravel pits, and power line right-of-ways. Arogos skippers in the Pinelands inhabit post-burn wetland habitats dominated by Pine Barrens reed grass (*Calamovilfa brevipilis*), which serves as its host plant (Schweitzer 1992). The disparity between arogos skipper habitat in northern and southern portions of New Jersey suggest that each population may differ genetically. The ENSP, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, began investigating this possibility in 2001.

Status and Conservation

This species is experiencing major declines across most (if not all) of its range and may be extirpated from major portions of its original range (Glassberg 1999). The little bluestem-feeding arogos populations that occur in northern New Jersey are currently the only extant populations of its kind in the Northeast. The Pine Barrens reed grass-feeding arogos is known from four locations in the Pinelands, which are the four largest of the five known populations of the ecotype in its entire range (D. Schweitzer pers. com.) In 2001 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was considering listing populations of arogos skipper that occur in the eastern United States.