

***Euphyes bayensis* Shuey, 1989**
Bay Skipper
(Hesperiidae: Hesperinae)

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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 Hesperidae. 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

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DISTRIBUTION MAP

(From USGS North Prairie Wildlife Research Center.

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/bflyusa/usa/471.htm>; accessed 5/10/05.)

