



Alaska Natural Heritage Program

Conservation Status Report

Hesperia comma - Linnaeus, 1758

Common Name: Common Branded Skipper

ELCODE: IILEP65030

Taxonomic Serial No.: 188611

Synonyms:

Taxonomy Notes: Numerous subspecies of *Hesperia comma* have been referenced for North America. Specimens in Alaska correspond with *Hesperia comma borealis* (Philip and Ferris 2016). The majority of butterfly records were determined only to species. We therefore only treat this butterfly at the species level for conservation assessment while recognizing that currently Alaskan specimens are considered to fall under (name of subspecies) - as treated by Ferris 2016. NatureServe concept reference: Opler & Warren (2002).

Report last updated – 16 May 2017

Conservation Status

G5 S4

ASRS: not yet ranked

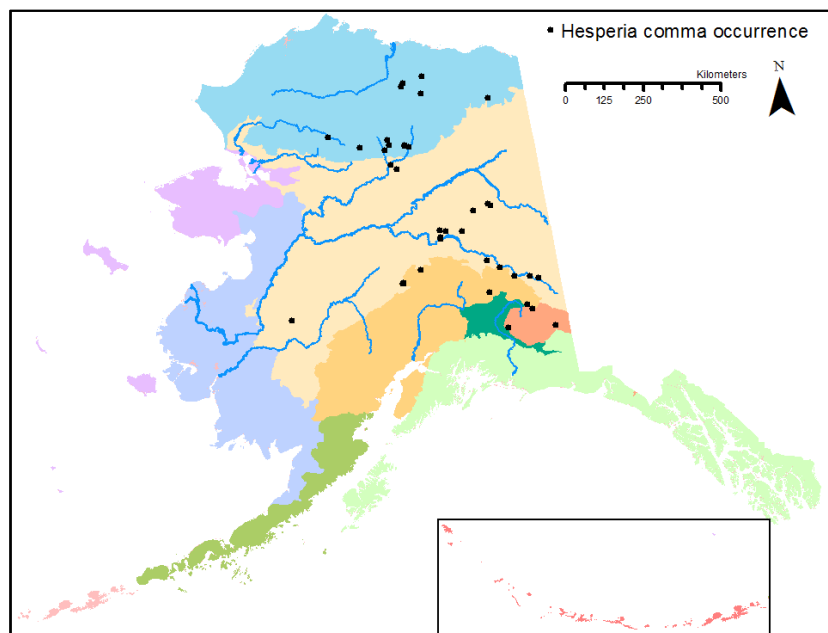
Occurrences, Range

Number of Occurrences: number of museum records: 125, number of EOs: 38. Individuals of this species are generally common in localized areas in Alaska (Philip & Ferris 2016).

AK Range Extent: 487,892 km²

Occupancy 4 km² grid cells: 38

Nowacki Ecoregions: Central Alaska: Arctic Coastal Plain and Brooks Range south throughout interior Alaska to the Wrangell-St. Elias Range; encompassing Arctic Tundra, Intermontane Boreal, Alaska Range Transition, and Coast Mountain Transition Ecoregions.

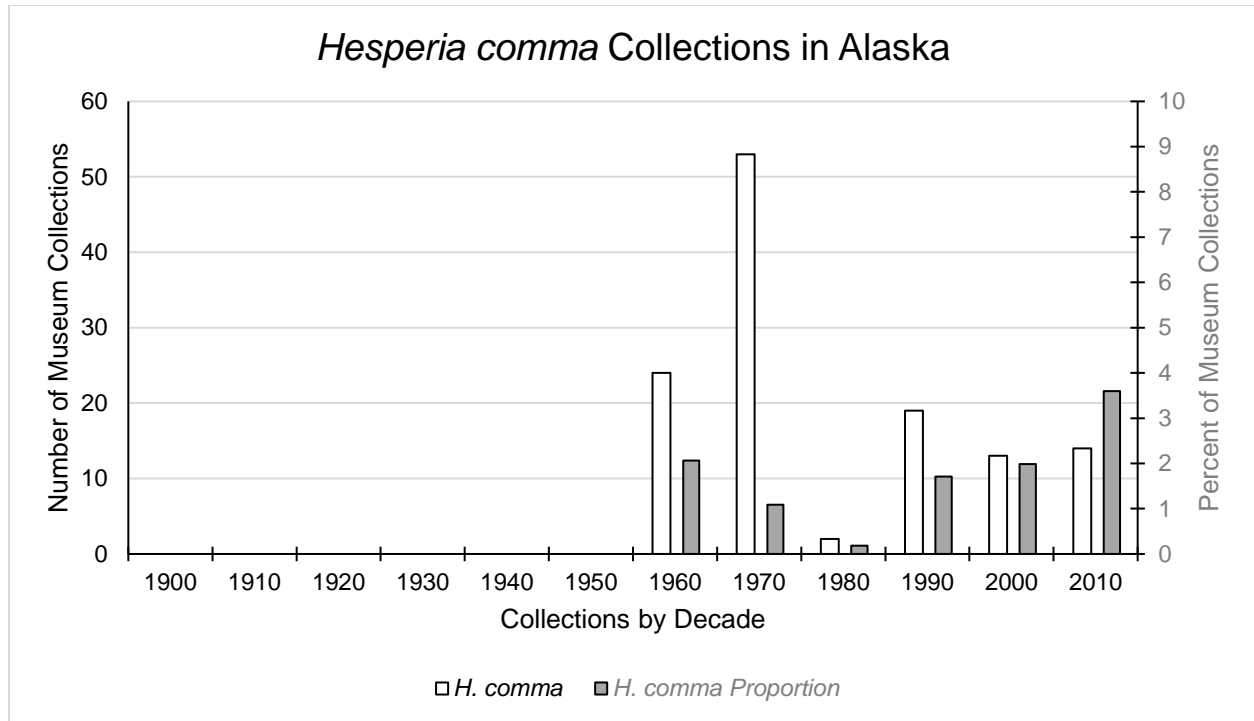


North American Distribution: Holarctic. In North America from Alaska east to Labrador and south along the western US states to California and New Mexico.

Trends

Short-term: Proportion collected has remained stable (<10% change).

Long-term: Proportion collected has remained stable (<10% change).



Threats

Scope and Severity: Most threats (including development, pollution, biological resource use, etc.) are anticipated to be negligible in scope and unknown in severity. This species is often associated with anthropogenic openings in forests such as roadsides and trails (Philip & Ferris 2016) and may benefit from some degree of development. Climate change and severe weather has the potential to affect populations; however we cannot anticipate the scope or severity of such impacts.

Ecology

Habitat: Open areas, such as roadsides and trails, in boreal forest in Alaska (Philip & Ferris 2016). More broadly this species is associated with a range of open habitats including forest openings and edges, meadows, fields, and tundra (BAMONA 2017).

Host Plants: Various grasses, including *Festuca rubra*, *Poa arctica*, *P. glauca*, *Lolium*, *Bromus* and sedges.

Life History: Flight period is from mid-June to early July in Alaska (Philip & Ferris 2016). Scott (1986) indicates that populations are biennial in Alaska, flying in odd years. Males perch on hilltops to intercept females. Females lay eggs on or near the host and the larvae eat leaves in nests of tied leaves. In the north, chrysalids or caterpillars hibernate rather than as eggs to the south (BAMONA 2017); however other sources suggest this species overwinters as eggs in Alaska (Philip & Ferris 2016).

Intrinsic Vulnerability: Unknown

Literature

BAMONA. 2017. Butterflies and Moths of North America. Attributes of *Hesperia comma*.

<http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Hesperia-comma>. Accessed 16 May 2017.

KWP, Kenelm W. Philip Lepidoptera Collection. 2017. Date Accessed 24 April 2017.

Opler, P. A., and A. D. Warren. 2002. Butterflies of North America. 2. Scientific Names List for Butterfly Species of North America, north of Mexico. C.P. Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity, Department of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. 79 pp.

Philip, K. W. and C. D. Ferris. 2016. Butterflies of Alaska: A Field Guide. Second Edition. Alaska Entomological Society. Clifford D. Ferris. Laramie, Wyoming. 110 pp.

Scott, J. A. 1986. The Butterflies of North America: A Natural History and Field Guide. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California. 583 pp.

UAM Arctos Museum of the North 2017. Date Accessed 24 April 2017.