



Alaska Natural Heritage Program

Conservation Status Report

Plebejus idas – (Linnaeus, 1761)

Common Name: Northern Blue

ELCODE: IILEPG5010

Taxonomic Serial No.: 777920

Synonyms: *Lycaeides argyrognomon* (Bergstrasser, 1779), *Lycaeides idas* (Linnaeus, 1761)

Taxonomy Notes: Specimens from Alaska correspond to *Plebejus idas alaskensis* F. Chermock, 1945 (Philip & Ferris 2016). NatureServe (2017) indicates this taxon is extremely variable and in some regions it is almost indistinguishable from *P. melissa* (which does not occur in Alaska), except in genitalia and that it is possible some of the subspecies should be recognized as full species. 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 – 23 May 2017

Conservation Status

G5 S5

ASRS: not yet ranked

Occurrences, Range

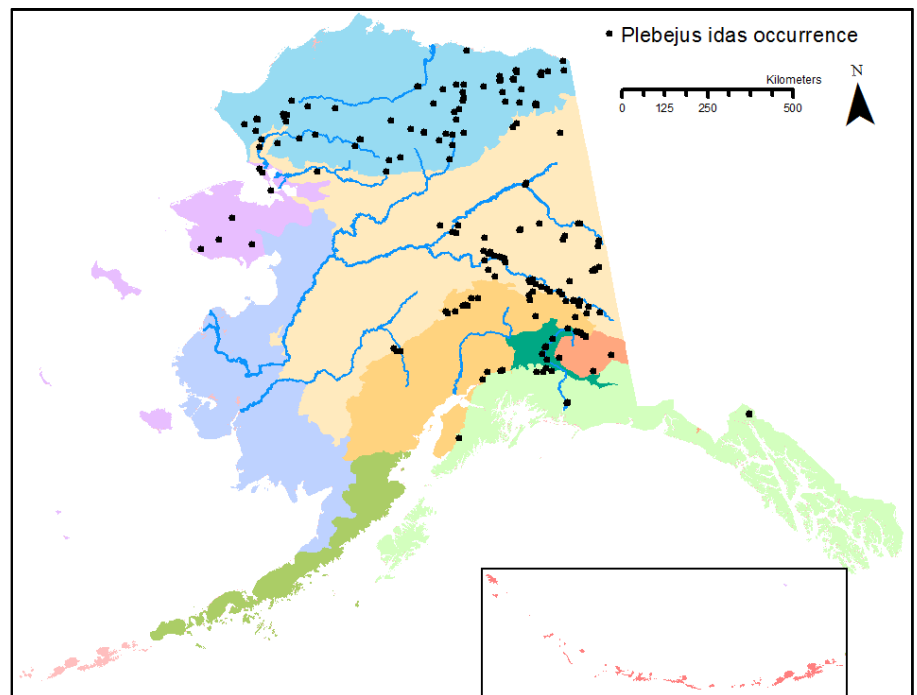
Number of Occurrences:

number of museum records:
902 (KWP 2017, UAM 2017),
number of EOs: 188

AK Range Extent: 916,546
km²

Occupancy 4 km² grid cells:
193

Nowacki Ecoregions: Arctic
Coastal Plain, Seward
Peninsula, through the interior
and Alaska Range to the
Kenai Peninsula and
southeastern Alaska;
encompassing Arctic Tundra,



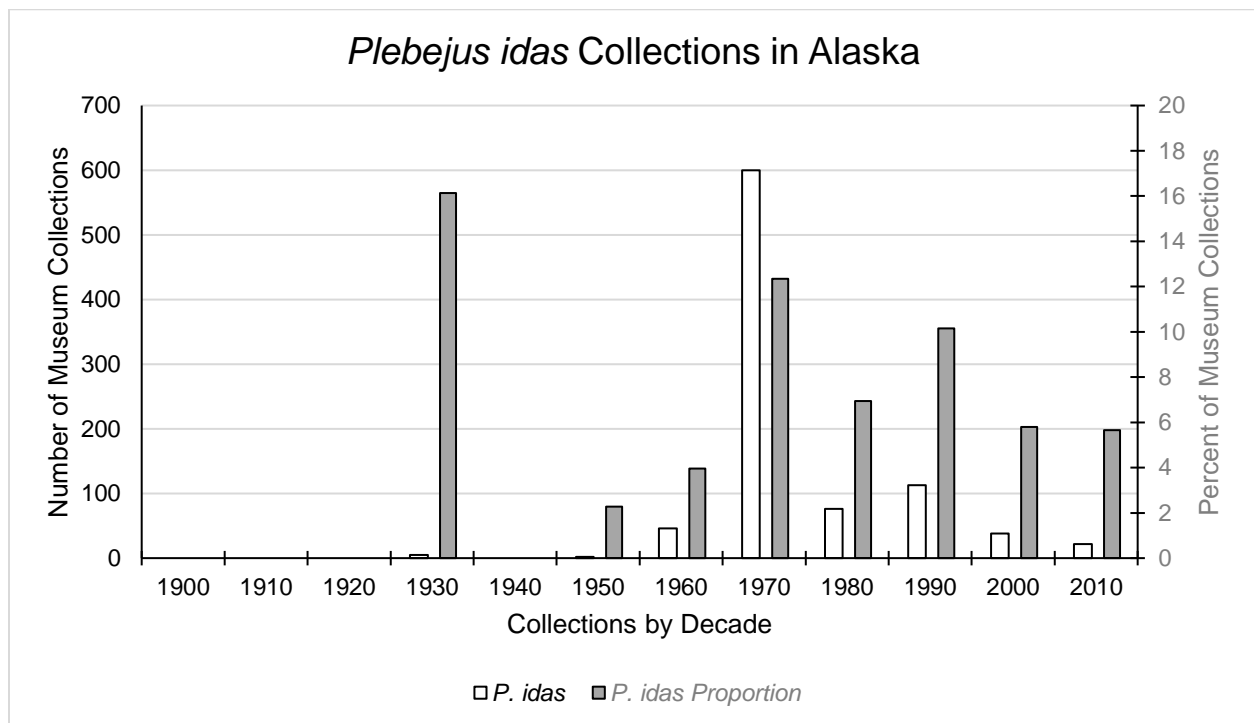
Bering Tundra, Intermontane Boreal, Alaska Range Transition, Coast Mountain Transition, and Coastal Rainforest Ecoregions.

North American Distribution: Holarctic; in North America, from Alaska south through the western mountains to California and through the Rocky Mountains to Colorado; east through Canada and the upper Midwest to Nova Scotia (BAMONA 2017).

Trends

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

Long-term: Proportion collected has fluctuated between 16% and 2% since the 1930's. No obvious trend present in the data.



Threats

Scope and Severity: Most threats (including development, pollution, biological resource use, etc.) are anticipated to be negligible in scope and unknown in severity. Climate change and severe weather has the potential to affect populations; however we cannot anticipate the scope or severity of such impacts.

Ecology

Habitat: Openings in mixed boreal forests and tundra to 2,000 feet elevation in Alaska (Philip & Ferris 2016); and elsewhere it is associated with meadows, bogs, and seeps (BAMONA 2017).

Plant Hosts: Members of the Ericaceae, including *Ledum* (*Rhododendron*), *Kalmia*, and *Vaccinium*, and *Empetrum*; members of the Fabaceae, including *Astragalus*, *Lathyrus*, *Lotus*, and *Lupinus* have been reported as hostplants (Philip & Ferris 2016, BAMONA 2017).

Life History: Flight period is late June to late July (Philip & Ferris 2016). Males patrol near host plants to intercept females. Females lay eggs on the stems of hostplants or in debris below the plant. Winter hibernation is reported to occur as eggs in Alaska (Philip & Ferris 2016)

Intrinsic Vulnerability: Unknown

Literature

BAMONA. 2017. Butterflies and Moths of North America. Attributes of *Plebejus idas*.

<http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Plebejus-idas>. Accessed 23 May 2017.

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

NatureServe. 2017. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application].

Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://explorer.natureserve.org>. Accessed 21 May 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.

Pelham, J. P. 2008. A catalogue of the butterflies of the United States and Canada with a complete bibliography of the descriptive and systematic literature. *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera*, vol. 40. xiv + 658.

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.