

Washington State Species and Communities of Special Concern

information for family forest owners

As a good land steward, it is important to be aware of plant and animal species of special concern that may occur on your lands, and how forest management activities may affect these species. The Washington State Implementation Committee (WA SIC) for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is pleased to provide a series of factsheets on species of special concern that may occur on forested lands within Washington State. Each species factsheet includes a description of the species, habitat, range, and information on known threats to populations in Washington.



Photo of Mardon Skipper (*Polites mardon*)
By William Leonard www.fws.gov

Species: Mardon Skipper (*Polites mardon*)

Group: Insect

Natural Heritage Rank: G2G3, S1

Legal Status: State Endangered

General Description

The species is a medium-sized prairie butterfly. Adults are 1 inch in length. This species has a stout, “fuzzy” body and fast skipping flight typical of skippers. Coloring is tawny-orange with darker bands along the upper edge of the wings. Adults emerge from pupae in the spring and mate. Larvae feed through most of the summer and winter as pupae. Adults eat nectar typically from violets and flowers in the vetch family. Larvae feed on bunchgrass, particularly Idaho fescue and red fescue. This species can be confused with other skipper species which slightly different wing color patterns.

Habitat

This species lives in prairie grasslands. Historic habitat includes the grasslands of the Puget Trough and meadows in pine forests east and south of Mt. Adams.

Threats

The primary threat to this species is conversion of prairie habitat to development, agriculture, and other uses, especially in the Puget Trough region. Other threats include mortality from insecticides, and habitat loss to forest in-growth and invasive exotic plants (especially Scotch broom).



Map of Counties where Mardon Skipper occur in Washington state. 2006

The information provided in this sheet has been compiled by the Washington SFI Implementation Committee. This species is one example of many that depend on family forest owners in Washington State for protection. To view other accounts, visit www.wdfw.wa.org or www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp, or www.natureserve.org.

