**SUMMARY**

The Rare Skipper is well named: apart from the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay, it is rare throughout its limited range. Scattered populations can be found in brackish river marshes and abandoned rice paddies along the Atlantic Coast from New Jersey to Georgia. Little is known of the life history of this butterfly. Threats are not documented, but it is probable that spraying for mosquito control is a potential threat in marsh areas, as are development and recreation activities.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

**Xerces Red List Status:** Imperiled

**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: DE: Endangered, MD: Threatened
- NatureServe: G2G3
- IUCN Red List: N/A

**SPECIES PROFILE**

**DESCRIPTION**

The Rare Skipper is a medium sized butterfly in the family Hesperiidae (skippers). Its wingspan is 1½ to 2½ inches (3.9 to 5.4 cm). The uppersides of both wings are yellow-orange with a black margin, which is wider on females. The undersides of the wings are yellow-orange on the forewing and yellow on the hindwing. Both wings are unmarked except for a black patch on the lower outer edge of the forewing (generally covered when at rest).
TAXONOMIC STATUS
*Problema bulenta* (Boisduval & LeConte), 1834.

LIFE HISTORY
Little is known of the life history of this butterfly. The habitat is brackish river marshes and abandoned rice paddies.

Life stage history and larval host plants are not well known. There is a single adult brood during June in the northern part of its range and two during May and June-September in the south. Egg laying has never been seen in the wild and only a few larvae reported. Larval host plant appears to be big cordgrass (*Spartina cynosuroides*) throughout the butterfly’s range, and possibly cutgrass (*Zizaniopsis* sp.) in the south. Larvae probably overwinter as a mid instar.

DISTRIBUTION
Scattered populations can be found along the Atlantic Coast from New Jersey to Georgia. It is known from less than two-dozen locations despite more than a century and a half of searching by lepidopterists.

THREATS
Spraying for mosquito control is a significant threat, especially in Delaware. Development and recreation activities are potential threats, as are river engineering projects and winter burning of marshlands. The marshes do not naturally burn during the summer and prescribed fires during the dormant season can devastate butterfly populations. Extreme storm events likely eliminate small populations.

CONSERVATION STATUS
The Rare Skipper is well named: apart from the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay, it is rare throughout its limited range.

Although the Rare Skipper is not listed at the federal level, both Delaware and Maryland list is as Endangered.

CONSERVATION NEEDS
Where populations exist, they and their habitats should be protected.

RESEARCH NEEDS
Little is known of this butterfly. Surveys of suitable wetlands for additional populations, life history studies, detailed ecological assessments of habitat, and an evaluation of threats would all be valuable.

RESOURCES

*Red List of Pollinator Insects*
Species profile: *Problema bulenta*, Rare Skipper
REFERENCES


WEBSITES
U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center; Butterflies of North America: Rare Skipper.
(Accessed 5/11/05)

NatureServe Explorer.
http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/
(Accessed 5/11/05)
RED LIST OF POLLINATOR INSECTS
Species profile: *Problema bulenta*, Rare Skipper