
**Broad Incidental Take Permit/Authorization
Grassland and Savanna Protocols
Northern Blue (*Lycaeides idas*)**

This Broad Incidental Take Permit/Authorization (BITP/A) has been issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to allow landowners to conduct certain grassland and savanna management activities while remaining in compliance with the state's endangered species law (s. 29.604, Wis. Stats.). This BITP/A allows for the incidental taking (mortality) of the state endangered northern blue (*Lycaeides idas*) that may occur as a result of the grassland and savanna management activities listed below.

Background information/criteria on this BITP/A must also be reviewed and followed:
https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ERReview/Documents/GSP_Overview.pdf

Protocols for all other species covered under this BITP/A can be found here:
<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ERReview/ItGrasslands.html>

Note: If carrying out a given protocol is not feasible, or multiple listed species in a given management area pose conflicts, contact the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) at DNRRERReview@wisconsin.gov. Staff in NHC will work with species experts and managers to establish an acceptable protocol for a given site that will allow for incidental take without further legal consultation or public notice.

I. Species Background Information

State Status: Endangered

Background information on the northern blue can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' web page for the species:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/Animals.asp?mode=detail&SpecCode=IILEPG5010>

II. Management Protocols for Permitted/Authorized Incidental Take

If the management activity is for the purpose of recovering, maintaining or improving the grassland, prairie or barrens ecosystem that includes habitat for the northern blue, then given the rarity of this species, the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) should be contacted at DNRRERReview@wisconsin.gov. Staff in the Endangered Resources Review Program will work with managers and species experts to determine the best course of action for a given site.

The butterfly population level and the portions of the management area that are critical to avoid jeopardizing the recovery of the species should be determined, and depending on the circumstances at the given site, incidental take may be allowed under the following conditions:

A. Burning

Consult with Endangered Resources Review Program - fire may be used on some portion of the habitat with the remaining dwarf bilberry bushes protected to avoid damage to eggs and larvae.

B. Mowing

Consult with Endangered Resources Review Program – mowing may be used to reduce competition from other vegetation in dwarf bilberry patches.

C. Selective Brush/Tree-cutting

Consult with Endangered Resources Review Program - may be used if cutting of encroaching brush and saplings occurs when the ground is covered with at least 6” snow and the host plants are well marked to reduce crushing and, if trees can be removed from the site without disturbance to the bilberry plants; that is, trees can be directed to fall away from the site, skidding does not occur in the opening, and vehicles are routed to the cutting area without passing through the site.

D. Herbicide Use

Consult with Endangered Resources Review Program – herbicides may be used for spot treatment of woody growth.

Survey Protocols

For Presence / Absence Surveys for Northern Blue:

Personnel conducting the surveys must be knowledgeable in Wisconsin blue butterfly identification.

Survey period: Adult flight season as indicated above. Observations of immatures are not acceptable for verification of northern blue presence. Note: the presence of ants and/or caterpillars observed on plants are indicators of possible butterfly use.

Weather conditions: Survey above 60 degrees F. Do not survey during rain or high winds.

Time of day: Survey between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Avoid surveying during midday when temperatures are above 90 degrees F.

Number of site visits: Survey twice during peak flight for two consecutive seasons.

Survey method: Search dwarf bilberry plants and nectar sources in the surrounding vicinity for butterflies. Include trails and roadways to look for puddling or patrolling males. Survey at least 20 minutes per acre of habitat.

Definitions

Definition of “Site” for Northern Blue: The area supporting dwarf bilberry and nectar plants including access roads and trails.