

INVERTEBRATES

LEPIDOPTERA (BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS)

Appalachian Grizzled Skipper, *Pyrgus wyandot*

Status:

State: Endangered

Federal: Not listed

Identification

The Appalachian grizzled skipper is a small (1.1"-1.3" or 29-33mm) grayish-black skipper that is endangered within New Jersey. This skipper is difficult to distinguish from the more ubiquitous common checkered skipper (*P. communis*), but the Appalachian grizzled skipper is slightly smaller and has fewer white markings on its wings. The white markings on the upper wing surface also tend to be somewhat less aligned in the



© Rick Cech

Appalachian grizzled skipper. The flight period of the adults can also be helpful in distinguishing this species from the common checkered skipper (see Life Cycle, below). Once considered a subspecies of the grizzled skipper (*P. Centaureae*), the Appalachian grizzled skipper's (*P. wyandot*) status as a separate species was proposed by Shapiro (1974) and is now accepted by many lepidopterists based on differences in the genitalia, larval characteristics, and habitat preferences of the two species.

Habitat

The Appalachian grizzled skipper is found in open, sparsely grassed and barren areas in close proximity (usually less than 30 m) to oak or pine forests (Schweitzer 1989). The presence of its larval host plant, dwarf cinquefoil (*Potentilla canadensis*), is also an important habitat requirement for this species (but see Diet below).

Status and Conservation

This species has experienced a major decrease in abundance as a result of insecticide applications targeted at controlling gypsy moth larvae. In combination with shortages in food plants, gypsy moth spraying may have extirpated this species from many historical locations.