

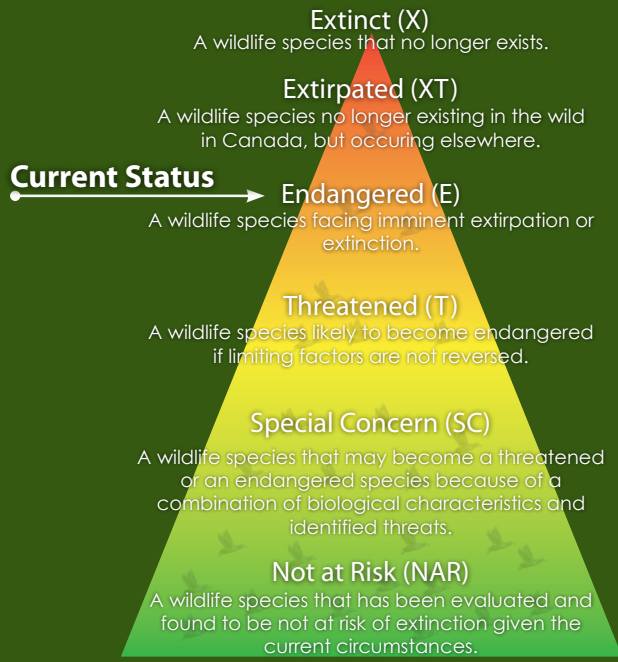
What is COSEWIC?

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada

An independent committee of wildlife experts and scientists from federal, provincial and territorial governments, universities, and non-government organizations, COSEWIC uses a scientific process to assess the risk of extinction for wildlife species. It meets annually to review status reports on species suspected of being at risk and provides assessments to government and the public.

What is the Species at Risk Act?

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) was created to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct. The Act protects species at risk and their critical habitats. SARA also contains provisions to help manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or extinct.



Community Members

Have you seen the Maritime Ringlet butterfly in this area or know any stories relating to it? If so, please call us or send us an email at the information below.

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Maritime Ringlet Butterfly

Coenonympha nipisiquit

Description

The Maritime ringlet is a small orange-coloured butterfly that is one of only two butterflies in Canada that is entirely limited to salt marsh habitats. This species was first discovered and described by J. McDunnough in 1939, from salt marshes near Bathurst, New Brunswick (McDunnough 1939). A member of the family Nymphalidae, or Brush-footed Butterflies, the Maritime ringlet flies in late July and August.



Chrysalis with butterfly inside.

The Maritime ringlet has a very restricted global distribution, and since its discovery it has been found at only a few additional sites. These are all within a relatively small area near Chaleur Bay in northern

New Brunswick and along the southern coast of the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec.

The primary factor resulting in the listing of the Maritime ringlet as Endangered was its very limited geographic distribution. This factor, together with the low number of sites and somewhat restricted and fragmented habitat, are the basis for recovery planning for the species in New Brunswick.

Distribution

Globally, the Maritime ringlet is restricted to the Chaleur Bay area of New Brunswick and Quebec. In Quebec it is known from four sites: Miguasha, St-Omer, St-Siméon-de-Bonaventure and Forillon National Park. In New Brunswick the Maritime ringlet is known from six sites. Four of these are located at Nepisiquit Bay, in or near Bathurst Harbour: Peters River (Beresford),

Daly Point, Carron Point, and Bass River. The two remaining known sites in New Brunswick are introduced populations at Bas-Caraquet and Rivière du Nord (Historical Acadian Village).

Although the New Brunswick and Quebec populations are relatively widely separated (by 70-160 km), within each province the known sites are clustered. Three of the Quebec sites are within 13 km of each other, although the population at Parc Forillon is located 160 km to the northeast of those sites. The New Brunswick sites (excluding the 2 introduced populations) occur within 10km of each other. Reasons for this limited and clustered distribution pattern are unclear.

Habitat

The species is limited to sections of saltwater marshes that are occupied most commonly by Salt-meadow Grass, Salt-water Cord Grass, Seaside Plantain, Sea-milkwort, Sea-lavender, seaside Goldenrod, and Eged's Silverweed. These plant species form the ecological system needed for the species to survive, thus Maritime Ringlets are rarely found more than 30m from their preferred habitat.



Salt marsh plant species utilized as nectar resources by adult Maritime ringlets, in descending order of preference, are Sea-lavender, Seaside Goldenrod, Sea-milkwort, and Silverweed.

However, Sea-lavender is the primary nectar source, accounting for approximately 90% of available nectar sources during the adult flight season and for 96% of all flower visitations.

Life Cycle

The flight season for adult Maritime ringlets occurs during mid July to late August. The timing of the flight season is dependent on spring and summer temperatures, with warm temperatures advancing the adult emergence period. Females mate soon after emergence, and oviposit on dead blades of Salt-meadow Grass, near the litter zone close to the base of living stems of Salt-meadow Grass. Oviposition occurs in a variety of microhabitats or plant communities within the salt marsh, but always on Salt-meadow Grass, even where this species comprises a small proportion of the plant community. Eggs hatch in 10-14 days.

Larvae feed on the tips of young shoots of Salt-meadow Grass that are within or near the litter region, at the base of mature grass stems. They molt to second instar in early to mid September, and then cease feeding and enter diapause in mid to late October.

During winter, diapausing larvae rest on the undersides of dead grass stems within the litter layer but above the water saturated soil surface. They resume feeding on developing shoots of Salt-meadow Grass during early to late May, and molt several times until they reach their fifth and final instar during mid June to early July. During the final two instars, the larvae feed near the top of the grass canopy rather than near the litter region. Pupation occurs during late June to early August, depending on microclimate conditions at the feeding site.



Newly-hatched Female

source: Recovery Strategy and Action Plan for The Maritime Ringlet (*Coenonympha Nipisiquit*) in New Brunswick.