

Karner Blue

Range: formerly occurred across 12 states from Minnesota to Maine and into the Canadian province of Ontario. Today there are populations in MN, WI, IN, MI, NY, NH, and OH.

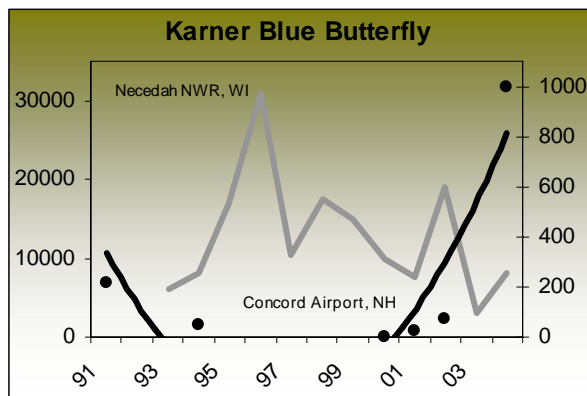
Endangered species listing: 1992
Federal recovery plans: 2003

Status since listing: Stable



The larvae of Karner blue butterflies (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*) feed exclusively on one species of wild lupine and thus their range is restricted to areas that support this species. Much of the lupine's habitat has been destroyed by development and degraded by successional changes causing a decline in Karner blue locations and numbers. By the time the Karner blue was listed as endangered in 1992 it had declined by least 99%. Currently, the largest and most widespread populations occur in Wisconsin and Michigan where their numbers appear to have stabilized.

Northeast Highlight: A large population of over 10,000 blues is found in New York at the Saratoga Airport and appears to be stable. In the Saratoga Sandplains area of NY, the town of Wilton has joined state and Federal agencies and The Nature Conservancy in the creation of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park, the heart of which will contain a core



population of Karner blues. Near Albany NY, the Pine Bush Preserve and the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission were established. Although Karner blue populations in this area have decreased, in part due severe weather conditions that occurred between 1998 and 2000, efforts to restore habitat, to link Karner blue sites together, and to develop a local supply of lupine seeds has met with some success. In addition, successful captive propagation

techniques have been developed for the Karner blue and reintroductions of captive bred Karner blues to sites in New Hampshire, Ohio, and Indiana have resulted in the establishment of new populations.

In New Hampshire, beginning in 2001, captive bred Karner blues were reintroduced to a site in the Concord Pine Barrens. Over 1,000 butterflies have been released at the site and in 2003 the butterfly began mating and reproducing in the wild again.