

# The Endangered Karner Blue Butterfly (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae): Biology, Management Considerations, and Data Gaps

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**Abstract:** The Karner blue butterfly, *Lycaeides melissa samuelis* Nabokov, became federally listed as endangered in 1992 and is thus afforded protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This insect has a very discontinuous range, with 1992 populations found in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, and New Hampshire. Karner blue larvae feed exclusively on wild lupine, *Lupinus perennis* L., a disturbance-adapted plant common to oak savannas, pine barrens, and lake dune complexes. Historically, Karner blue sites have been maintained by fire. Besides lupine, the Karner blue requires nectar sources for adults and possibly ants for protection of the larvae. This paper provides current information on Karner blue distribution, taxonomy, general biology, habitat requirements, management practices, and data gaps.

## INTRODUCTION

The Karner blue butterfly, *Lycaeides melissa samuelis* Nabokov (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae), occurs primarily in oak savannas and pine barrens, and occasionally in lake dune complexes from Minnesota to New Hampshire. Over the past 100 years it is estimated that the Karner blue has declined by 99% in numbers (USFWS 1992). In December 1992 the Karner blue was federally listed as endangered (USFWS 1992), and therefore now receives protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Pyle et al. 1981, Rohlf 1989, Wilcove et al. 1993). Land managers with known Karner blue populations should follow management prescriptions to ensure its survival and recovery as stipulated in the Endangered Species Act. To assist managers, this paper summarizes much of what is known about Karner blue biology, habitat requirements, and management considerations.

## DISTRIBUTION

The Karner blue is found in small pockets from Minnesota to New Hampshire, generally following the northern limits of the range of wild lupine, *Lupinus perennis* L., the insect's only larval food plant (Figure 1). Originally the Karner blue probably existed as several, large shifting clusters of populations, or metapopulations, waxing and waning as lupine first entered recently burned areas and then left when successional changes shaded out the plant (USFWS 1992, Schweitzer 1990). As of 1992, the Karner blue existed in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, and New Hampshire (Table 1), with Michigan and Wisconsin appearing to have the most (but not the largest) discrete populations (USFWS 1992). In addition, this butterfly once existed in Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Ontario (Figure 1, Table 1). In Illinois, 5 adults (3 males and 2 females) were reported in 1992, being the first confirmed occurrence of Karner blue in Illinois since about 1900 (S. Lauzon, pers. comm., Downey 1966). Because of some early confusion regarding these sightings in Illinois, 7 adults instead of 5 were reported in USFWS (1992).

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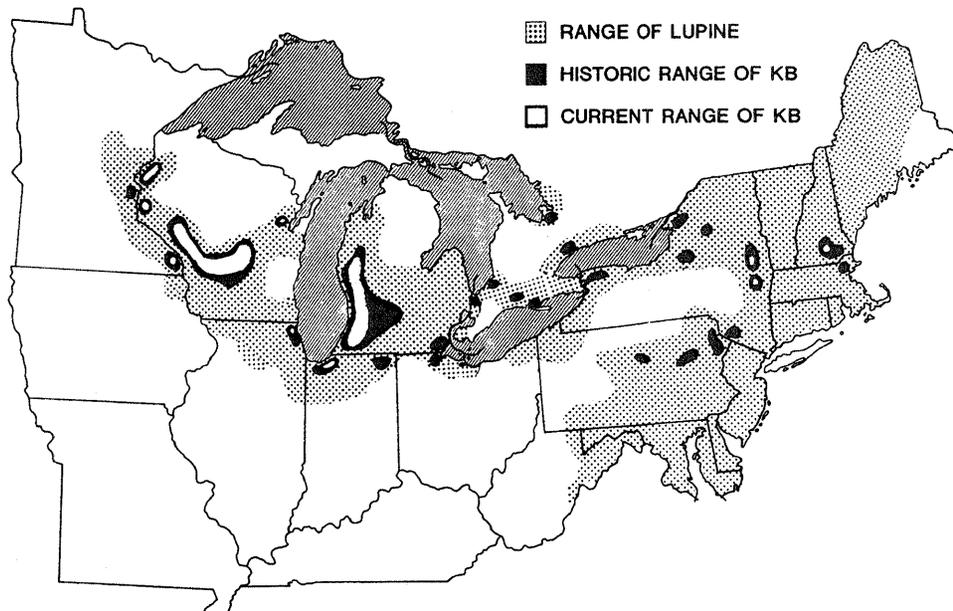


Figure 1.—Approximate range maps of wild lupine (incomplete, not showing extension southward to Florida), and the historic and current (1992) ranges of Karner blue (KB). The northern range of lupine was estimated from county records taken from over 30 books on the flora of individual states and regions (list of references available from the author), and from lupine survey records of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Karner blue sources include: Cryan and Dirig (1978); briefing material presented at the “Karner Blue Butterfly Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) Workshop,” April 22-24, 1992, Zanesville, OH; and comments from several reviewers (see acknowledgments).

### ENDANGERED STATUS

Because of its dramatic rangewide decline, the Karner blue was proposed on January 21, 1992, for federal listing as “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act; this proposal became final on December 14, 1992 (USFWS 1992). The designation “endangered” signifies a species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant part of its range (Haack 1992, Rohlf 1989, Wilcove et al. 1993). Having been afforded endangered species status, the Karner blue is protected from actions that could jeopardize either the insect itself or its “critical habitat.” For example, gypsy moth control programs, using the lepidopteran-specific *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) insecticide, could be banned from areas with known Karner blue populations because of the possible “non-target” effects of *Bt*. Although it is not yet known if Karner blue is sensitive to *Bt*, a “no-spray” policy would likely be taken as a precautionary step.

### TAXONOMY

The Karner blue was originally described in 1861 under the name *Lycaeides scudderi* Edwards, being considered then the same species as the Scudder’s blue. However, after a revision by Nabokov (1943) it was reclassified as a subspecies of the Melissa blue (*Lycaeides melissa melissa* Edwards), with the scientific name of *Lycaeides melissa samuelis* Nabokov. Although there is evidence that the Karner blue deserves full species status, no such change has yet been published (Schweitzer 1989, USFWS 1992). The type specimen of the Karner blue was collected near Karner, New York, from which its common name was derived.

Table 1.—Status of the Karner blue throughout its current and historical ranges of 1992

Location	Current status (Current and recent references)*
Minnesota	5 sites in 1 population cluster; $\leq 14$ adults/site seen in 1991 (8 13 20)
Wisconsin	131 sites in 1991; $\leq 100$ adults seen at 90% of sites (4, 20)
Illinois	Considered extirpated ca. 1900; 5 adults reported in 1992 (20, 22)
Indiana	10 discrete sites in 2 population clusters in 2 counties (20, 24)
Michigan	Minimum of 93 sites in 6 counties (1, 2, 9, 14, 20, 21, 23)
Ohio	Extirpated since 1988 (10, 15, 19, 20)
Pennsylvania	Extirpated since about 1900 (16, 20)
New York	About 50 small and 2 large (1500 and 14,000 adults) sites (6, 7, 18, 20)
New Hampshire	1 site on 2-3 acres; 400 adults estimated in 1991 (3, 11, 20)
Massachusetts	Extirpated possibly before 1900 (20)
Ontario	Extirpated since about 1989 (12, 17, 20)

\*References: 1=Ballard and Sferra (1991), 2=Bess (1989), 3=Bidwell (1991), 4=Bleser (1992), Campbell et al. (1990), 6=Cryan (1980), 7=Cryan and Dirig (1978), 8=Cuthrell (1990), 9=Ewert and Ballard (1990), 10=Grigore (1992), 11=Helmboldt and Amaral (1992), 12=Konecny (1986), 13=Lane (1992), 14=Lawrence and Cook (1989), 15=Magdich (1989), 16=Opler (1985), 17=Packer (1990), 18=Schweitzer (1990), 19=Shuey et al. (1987), 20=USFWS (1992), 21=Wilsmann (1992), 22=S. Lauzon, personal communication, 23=M. Rabe personal communication, Michigan Natural Features Inventory, 24=M. Martin (1992).

#### DESCRIPTION

Karner blue adults are rather small butterflies with a wingspan between 2.2 and 3.2 cm (Opler and Krizek 1984, Scudder 1889, USFWS 1992). The dorsal or upper wing surface of males is purplish (or silvery) blue with a narrow black border and a white fringe. The dorsal wing surface of females is similar to that of males except there is more brown and the outer edge of the female's hind wings has a row of dark spots with orange crescents. The ventral or lower surface of the wings is similar in both males and females—slate gray with several rows of black and orange spots. High quality Karner blue photographs are given in Opler and Krizek (1984), Shull (1987), and several other butterfly guides.

Eggs are about 0.7 mm in diameter, pale green, and somewhat rounded (Dirig and Cryan 1976, Scudder 1889). The egg's surface is highly sculptured or reticulated, appearing as a raised network of fine lines.

Larvae are dorsally flattened and pubescent, with black head capsules and green bodies (Dirig and Cryan 1976, Scudder 1889). Older larvae have a dark-green median stripe along the upper surface of the abdomen and white stripes laterally. Karner blue larvae are well camouflaged for feeding on lupine leaves. There are four larval instars (Savignano 1990). Scudder (1889) reports that first instar larvae measure about 1.25 mm in length, while fourth instars measure 12.25 mm long. Pupae are smooth, pea-green, and about 9.5 mm long (Scudder 1889). Pupae turn blackish purple just prior to adult emergence (C. Bleser, pers. comm.).

**Life Cycle**

The Karner blue's life history is generally well documented, with the following details taken from Bleser (1992), Cryan (1980), Cryan and Dirig (1978), Dirig (1973, 1988), Lawrence and Cook (1989), Masters and Karpuleon (1975), Packer (1987, 1990), Savignano (1990), Shapiro (1974), Schweitzer (1989), Scudder (1888, 1889), and Shuey et al. (1987). It is a bivoltine insect, i.e., it completes two generations per year (Figure 2) with the egg being the overwintering stage. The exact timing of each life stage varies somewhat within the species' geographic range, and from year to year, depending on local weather conditions. First-generation larvae hatch from eggs in middle to late April, and immediately search out and feed on wild lupine, their sole host plant. While feeding, young larvae make pinprick-sized circular holes in leaves or they skeletonize the leaves, which results in a window-pane appearance. Older larvae feed primarily on foliage, but may feed on lupine buds, flowers, and developing fruit. Larvae feed for about 3 to 4 weeks. First-generation pupation occurs primarily in late May to early June and lasts for about 8-11 days. Pupae are usually found on lupine plants or in nearby litter. First-generation adults fly from late May through mid-June. Adults typically live for about 5 days, but may live as long as 2 weeks. Peak male flight typically precedes peak female flight by a few days, as is true in many Lepidoptera. First-generation adults lay eggs on lupine plants, often singly on leaves, petioles, or stems. The male:female ratio is about 1:1.

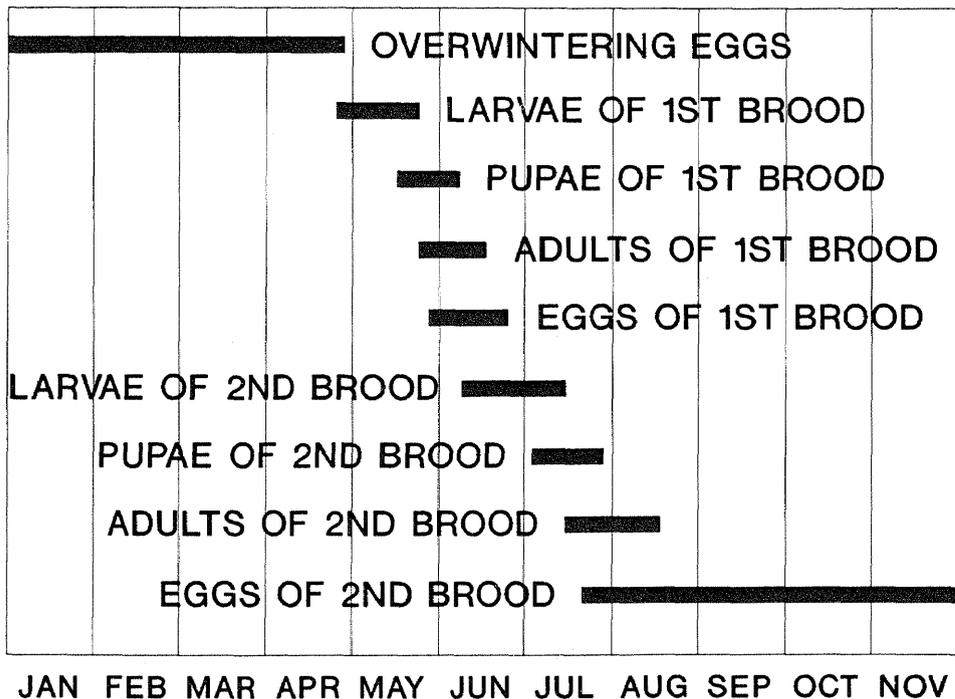


Figure 2.—Generalized occurrence of various Karner blue life stages through a typical year.

Larvae of the second generation can be found feeding on lupine from early June through late July. Second-generation adults typically fly from mid-July into early August. There are usually 3-4 times more individual adults in the second brood than in the first brood at a given locality. Second-generation adults lay eggs at or near the bases of lupine plants, on dry lupine pods, or low on the stems of surrounding vegetation. During the second-generation flight period, at which time lupine plants are senescing, adults do not appear to discriminate between dry and green plants for oviposition.

Adults initiate flight between 8-9 a.m. and continue to fly until about 7 p.m. Flight activity is greatly reduced below 75°F or during moderate to heavy rains. Adults tend to fly close to the ground. At night, they roost in open areas on grasses such as bluestem, *Schizachyrium* (= *Andropogon*). Adults can disperse at least as far as 1-1.5 km, which seemingly would help them search for new patches of lupine. However, in some populations (e.g., in New Hampshire), adults disperse very little (D. Schweitzer pers. comm.).

### **Nectar Sources**

Karner blue adults obtain nectar from a wide variety of flowering plants, including both native and exotic species (Table 2). Lupine is used as a nectar source by first-generation adults, but few lupine plants are still flowering when second-generation adults fly. Although lupine is the sole larval host plant, it is not a favored nectar plant for adults (Leach 1993). Wide variation in the favored nectar plants occurs from state to state. However, New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) is among the favorite nectar sources in Indiana, New Hampshire, New York, and Ontario (D. Schweitzer in press-b). A lack of nectaring plants, especially during the second-generation flight season, can render sites unsuitable for Karner blue even though lupine may abound (Bleser 1992, Leach 1993, Schweitzer 1989).

### **Association with Ants**

Karner blue larvae, like many members of the family Lycaenidae, are associated with ants (Bleser 1992, Packer 1990, Savignano 1990, Scudder 1889). Reports from New York, Wisconsin, and Ontario have identified 27 species of ants that tend Karner blue caterpillars (Table 3). There is one report of ants tending a Karner blue pupa (Saunders 1878).

Lycaenid caterpillars and pupae have special glands that secrete juices high in sugars and amino acids that are harvested by ants (DeVries 1988, 1992, Maschwitz et al. 1975). In return for these nutritious secretions, ants protect lycaenid caterpillars and pupae from predation and parasitism (Atstatt 1981a, Jordano et al. 1992, Peterson 1993, Pierce and Eastal 1986). Savignano (1990) has reported lower predation of Karner blue larvae when tended by ants. Many lycaenid caterpillars, and perhaps Karner blue larvae as well, produce sounds that ants use to locate the larvae (Bleser 1992, DeVries 1988, 1989, 1992).

In addition, some lycaenids oviposit preferentially in habitats with ants (Atstatt 1981b, Pierce and Elgar 1985), which may help explain why lycaenid larvae are often found in close spatial proximity to ants (Jordano et al. 1992, Smiley et al. 1988). If these relationships hold true for the Karner blue, then it may be discovered that adults seek out and oviposit in habitats with both lupine and selected ant species. Packer (1987) suggested that a drastic decline in wood ant populations contributed to local declines of Karner blue in Ontario.

Table 2.—Nectaring sources for first-generation and second-generation Karner blue adults

Scientific name	Plant		Location	Reference
	Common name			
First generation nectaring sources				
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow		WI	2 13
<i>Amelanchier</i> sp.	Juneberry		NY ONT	3 7
<i>Anemone cylindrica</i>	Thimbleweed		WI	13
<i>Arabis lyrata</i>	Lyre-leaved rock cress		IN ONT WI	2 7 12 13
<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved sandwort		ONT	7
<i>Baptisia leucophaea</i>	Wild indigo		WI	2
<i>Berteroa incana</i>	Hoary alyssum		WI	2 13
<i>Ceanothus ovatus</i>	Red root		WI	13
<i>Ceanothus</i> sp.	New Jersey tea		WI	2
<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>	Spotted knapweed		WI	13
<i>Cerastium</i> sp.	Chickweed		WI	13
<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	Daisy		WI	13
<i>Comandra umbellata</i>	Bastard toadflax		MI WI	2 10
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Lance-leaved coreopsis		IN	12
<i>Erigeron strigosus</i>	Daisy fleabane		WI	13
<i>Euphorbia esula</i>	Leafy spurge		WI	13
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Strawberry		NY WI	9 13
<i>Gaylussacia baccata</i>	Huckleberry		WI	2
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Wild geranium		ONT	7
<i>Heliopsis scabra</i>	Frostweed		NH	1 5
<i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i>	Orange hawkweed		WI	2 13
<i>Hieracium</i> sp.	Hawkweed		NH NY ONT	5 7 9
<i>Houstonia longifolia</i>	Long-leaved bluets		WI	2
<i>Krigia biflora</i>	Two-flowered cynthia		WI	2
<i>Lithospermum carolinense</i>	Hairy puccoon		ONT WI	2 7
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Wild lupine		MI NH ONT WI	1 2 4 5 7 13
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black medick		WI	2 13
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	Yellow sweet clover		IN WI	2 12 13
<i>Pedicularis canadensis</i>	Lousewort		WI	2
<i>Phlox pilosa</i>	Downy phlox		IN	12
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	Nine-bark		WI	13
<i>Potentilla recta</i>	Rough-fruited cinquefoil		WI	2
<i>Potentilla simplex</i>	Common cinquefoil		MI NY WI	2 8 10 13
<i>Prunus</i> sp.	Wild plum		NY	3 8
<i>Rubus allegheniensis</i>	Blackberry		MI	4 10
<i>Rubus flagellaris</i>	Dewberry		IN	12
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	Blackberry		IN NY WI	3 9 12 13
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	Dewberry		WI	13
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep sorrel		WI	2
<i>Salix humilis</i>	Prairie willow		WI	2 13
<i>Senecio pauperculus</i>	Ragwort		WI	13
<i>Senecio</i> sp.	Ragwort		WI	2
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	False Solomon's seal		WI	2 13
<i>Smilacina stellata</i>	Starry false Solomon's seal		WI	2
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover		WI	13
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover		WI	13
<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>	Alsike clover		WI	2
<i>Vaccinium</i> sp.	Blueberry		NY	3 9
<i>Vicia villosa</i>	Vetch		WI	2
<i>Viola pedata</i>	Bird's-foot violet		WI	2
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden alexanders		WI	2

Table 2. (Continued)

Scientific name	Plant Common name	Location	Reference
Second generation nectaring sources			
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	IN WI	2 12 13
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Leadplant	NY WI	2 9 13
<i>Apocynum androsaemifolium</i>	Spreading dogbane	NH	1
<i>Arabis lyrata</i>	Lyre-leaved rock cress	IN WI	2 12 13
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common milkweed	WI	2 13
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly weed	IN MI ONT WI	2 4 7 12 13
<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	Whorled milkweed	IN WI	2 12 13
<i>Aster ptarmicoides</i>	Upland white aster	WI	2
<i>Aureolaria pedicularia</i>	False foxglove	WI	2
<i>Berteroa incana</i>	Hoary alyssum	WI	2
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Bluebell	MN	6
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey tea	IN NH NY ONT	1 5 7 9 12
<i>Ceanothus herbaceus</i>	New Jersey tea	ONT	7
<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>	Spotted knapweed	MI NY WI	2 4 9 10 13
<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	Daisy	WI	13
<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>	Coreopsis	WI	13
<i>Coreopsis</i> sp.	Coreopsis	WI	2
<i>Erigeron</i> sp.	Daisy fleabane	IN	12
<i>Erigeron annuus</i>	Daisy fleabane	MI	10
<i>Erigeron strigosus</i>	Daisy fleabane	MI WI	2 10 13
<i>Euphorbia corollata</i>	Flowering spurge	IN MI WI	2 4 10 12 13
<i>Euphorbia esula</i>	Leafy spurge	WI	2 13
<i>Froelichia floridana</i>	Cottonweed	WI	13
<i>Galium</i> sp.	Bedstraw	WI	2
<i>Gerardia pedicularia</i>	Fern-leaved false foxglove	WI	2
<i>Gnaphalium obtusifolium</i>	Sweet everlasting	MN	6
<i>Helianthus divaricatus</i>	Woodland sunflower	IN	12
<i>Helianthus occidentalis</i>	Western sunflower	WI	2 13
<i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i>	Orange hawkweed	WI	2 13
<i>Houstonia longifolia</i>	Long-leaved bluets	WI	2
<i>Krigia biflora</i>	Two-flowered cynthia	WI	2
<i>Lespedeza capitata</i>	Round-headed bush-clover	WI	2
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Rough blazing-star	MI WI	4 13
<i>Liatris cylindracea</i>	Cylindric blazing-star	WI	2 13
<i>Lilium philadelphicum</i>	Wood lily	NH	1 5
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	Butter-and-eggs	WI	2
<i>Lithospermum caroliniana</i>	Hairy puccoon	WI	2
<i>Lobelia spicata</i>	Pale-spike lobelia	WI	13
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Birdfoot trefoil	WI	2
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Wild lupine	WI	2
<i>Lysimachia</i> sp.	Loosestrife	WI	2
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black medick	WI	13
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Alfalfa	WI	2
<i>Melilotus alba</i>	White sweet clover	IN MI NY WI	9 11 12 13
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	Yellow sweet clover	WI	2 13
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild bergamot	IN ONT	7 12
<i>Monarda punctata</i>	Horsemint	IN MI MN NY WI	2 3 4 6 12 13
<i>Oenothera</i> sp.	Evening primrose	WI	2
<i>Petalostemum candidum</i>	White prairie-clover	WI	2 13
<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>	Purple prairie-clover	WI	2 13
<i>Phlox pilosa</i>	Downy phlox	IN	12

Table 2. (Continued)

Scientific name	Plant		Location	Reference
	Scientific name	Common name		
<i>Potentilla simplex</i>		Old-field cinquefoil	WI	2
<i>Polygala polygama</i>		Racemed milkwort	WI	2
<i>Polygonum</i> sp.		Smartweed	WI	2
<i>Rosa</i> sp.		Rose	WI	2
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>		Black-eyed Susan	ONT WI	2 7 13
<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>		Bouncing bet	NY	8
<i>Smilacina stellata</i>		Starry false Solomon's seal	WI	2
<i>Solidago graminifolia</i>		Lance-leaved goldenrod	WI	2
<i>Solidago speciosa</i>		Showy goldenrod	WI	2
<i>Solidago</i> sp.		Goldenrod	IN NH	1 5 12
<i>Spiraea alba</i>		Narrowleaf meadowsweet	WI	2
<i>Spiraea tomentosa</i>		Steeplebush	WI	2
<i>Talinum rugospermum</i>		Fameflower	WI	2 13
<i>Tephrosia virginiana</i>		Goat's-rue	IN	12
<i>Trifolium arvense</i>		Rabbit's-foot clover	WI	2
<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>		Alsike clover	WI	2
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>		Red clover	WI	2 13
<i>Trifolium repens</i>		White clover	WI	2 13
<i>Vicia villosa</i>		Vetch	WI	2
<i>Tephrosia virginiana</i>		Goat's-rue	NY WI	2 3

\*References: 1=Bidwell (1991), 2=Bleser (1990, 1992), 3=Cryan (1980), 4=Ewert and Ballard (1990), 5=Helmboldt and Amaral (1992), 6=Lane (1992), 7=Packer (1990), 8=Savignano (1987), 9=Schweitzer (1989), 10=Sferra and Darnell (1992), 11=Wilsmann (1992), 12=Martin (1992), 13=Leach (1993), 14=D. Schweitzer personal communication.

### Predators and Parasites

Only a few Karner blue predators and parasites have been reported. Larval predators include spiders (Packer 1987), pentatomid stink bugs, *Polistes* wasps, and *Formica* ants (Savignano 1990). Similarly, adult predators include crab spiders, robber flies, ambush bugs, assassin bugs, and dragonflies (Bleser 1992, M. Leach pers. comm., Packer 1987, Savignano 1990 and unpub. data). Savignano (1990) reported four larval parasites of the Karner blue — the tachinid fly *Aplomya theclarum*, the braconid wasp *Apanteles* sp. (possibly *epinotiae*), and two ichneumonid wasps, *Neotypus nobilitator nobilitator* and *Paranta geniculata*. Savignano (1990) reared the tachinid *Aplomya theclarum* from both first- and second-generation Karner blue larvae, suggesting that it may be a lycaenid specialist. In Stone et al. (1983), however, no host data are reported for this fly. Of the three parasitic wasps, Krombein et al. (1979) list several lepidopteran hosts (although none are lycaenids) for *A. epinotiae* and *P. geniculata*, whereas only one host is given for *N. nobilitator nobilitator*—the eastern tailed blue, *Everes comyntas* (Lycaenidae).

### General Habitat

The Karner blue is primarily found in openings within habitats classified as oak savannas, pine-oak savannas, or pine barrens (Shuey in press). Such habitats have declined dramatically in acreage throughout North America. For example, Nuzzo (1986) estimates that only 0.02% of the presettlement acreage of oak savannas in the Midwest still existed as of 1985. In addition to savanna-type habitats, the Karner blue occasionally occurs in dry sand prairies and some lake shore dune complexes where lupine exists (Bess 1989, Martin 1992). Generally, the Karner blue is associated with areas of low canopy cover (<5% in Minnesota; Lane 1992), but at times this butterfly occurs under semi-closed canopy conditions as well (Leach 1993).

Table 3.—Ant species reported to tend Karner blue larvae

Ant species	Location	Reference
<i>Aphaenogaster rudis</i>	Ontario	Packer (1990)
<i>Camponotus americanus</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Camponotus ferrugineus</i>	WI	Bleser (1992)
<i>Camponotus novboracensis</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Camponotus pennsylvanicus</i>	Ontario	Packer (1990)
<i>Crematogaster ashmeadi</i>	WI	Bleser (1992)
<i>Crematogaster cerasi</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Dolichoderus plagiatus</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Formica exsectoides</i>	Ontario	Packer (1990)
<i>Formica fusca</i>	WI	Bleser (1992)
<i>Formica (Neoformica) incerta</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Formica lasioides</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Formica (Neoformica) nitidiventris</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Formica (Neoformica) schaufusssi</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Formica lasioides</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Formica montana</i>	WI	Bleser (1992)
<i>Formica schaufusssi</i>	WI	Bleser (1992)
<i>Formica subsericea</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Lasius alienus</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Lasius neoniger</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Monomorium emarginatum</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Myrmica americana</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Myrmica punctiventris</i>	Ontario	Packer (1990)
<i>Myrmica sculptilis</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Paratrechina parvula</i>	NY	Savignano (1990)
<i>Tapinoma sessile</i>	NY, WI	Bleser (1992), Savignano (1990)
<i>Tetramorium caespitum</i>	WI	Bleser (1992)

Pitch pine, *Pinus rigida*, is the dominant pine species in the pine barrens of the eastern part of the Karner blue's range, while jack pine, *Pinus banksiana*, is the most common pine at the western end (i.e., in the Lake States). Similarly, scrub oak, *Quercus ilicifolia*, and dwarf chestnut oak, *Quercus prinoides*, prevail in the east, while northern pin oak, *Quercus ellipsoidalis*, white oak, *Quercus alba*, and black oak, *Quercus velutina*, are the common oaks in the western range of the Karner blue (Bess 1989, Cryan 1980, Cryan and Dirig 1978, Lane 1992, Masters and Karpuleon 1975, Savignano 1990). These habitats are typically dry and sandy, and historically have been maintained by fire (Nuzzo 1986, Shuey in press). Because lupine generally expands after a disturbance opens the canopy and the soil, fire or other disturbances are believed to be important in maintaining lupine in the landscape. Similarly, lupine and Karner blue are often found in disturbed areas such as along gas and powerline rights-of-way, sand pits, highway margins, edges of trails and dirt roads, and abandoned farm fields.

## Lupine

The exclusive larval food plant of the Karner blue is wild lupine, a sun-loving, long-lived perennial legume, with a deep taproot (Boyonoski 1992, Grigore 1992). Lupine fixes nitrogen by means of the obligate bacterial symbiont *Rhizobium lupini*. The range of lupine extends from Minnesota to

Maine, through southern Ontario, and south along the Atlantic seaboard to the Gulf coast (Figure 1). In the northern portion of its range, lupine typically begins to grow in late March or early April, flowers during May and June, sets seed by mid-July, and senesces during late July and August (Dirig 1973, Grigore 1992). Lupine grows well in full sunlight as well as partial shade, but does not survive for very long in complete shade (Bess 1989, Smallidge and Leopold, in prep.). Leach (1993) reports that lupine appears to do best in areas with a mosaic of both sun and shade. Lupine is becoming rare in many parts of its range, reflecting in large part the decades of effective fire suppression and subsequent canopy closure (Shuey in press). Although fire is important in maintaining habitats suitable for lupine growth, fire can cause high mortality to lupine seed and seedlings (Boyonoski 1992, Grigore 1992).

### Other Lupine Feeders

In addition to the Karner blue, there are two other local (and rare) lupine-feeding Lepidoptera: the frosted elfin, *Incisalia irus* (Lycaenidae), and the Persius dusky wing, *Erynnis persius* (Hesperiidae) (Shapiro 1974, Shuey et al. 1987). Ideally, the management practices selected to favor lupine and Karner blue should also benefit these other two lepidopterans (Campbell et al. 1990, Packer 1990, Schweitzer in press-a). Moreover, barrens and savanna communities are home to many other rare plants, invertebrates, and vertebrates, and probably all would be helped by efforts to restore and maintain these habitats. For example, Michigan Karner blue sites harbor many state-listed rare plants such as western silvery aster (*Aster sericeus*), side-oat grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), yellow flax (*Linum sulcatum*), Allegheny plum (*Prunus alleghaniensis*), and prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*); rare invertebrates such as the dusted skipper (*Atrytonopsis hianna*, Persius dusky wing, Ottoe's skipper (*Hesperia ottoe*), frosted elfin, and regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*); and rare vertebrates like the eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*).

### Minimum Habitat Requirements

Overall, the Karner blue appears to have two undisputed requirements: lupine for larvae and nectar sources for adults. Two other factors that may prove equally important are ants for protection of larvae and some source of shade (Leach 1993, Packer 1990). If any of these factors is lacking, the Karner blue could decline or perish at a given site.

A discussion about the acreage required to support Karner blue can be focused at the level of remnant demes as well as at the metapopulation level; see Schweitzer (in press-a,b) for a detailed discussion. Openings that support Karner blue do not need to be extremely large. For example, openings of even a single acre in size support Karner blue in New York (Schweitzer 1989), Wisconsin (Bleser 1992), and elsewhere. Nevertheless, if these small openings are isolated, resident Karner blue populations could easily be vulnerable to extinction. Therefore, small openings should not be considered as a management goal in themselves unless they are relatively close and possibly interconnected by way of dispersal corridors. In general, the smaller the opening the greater will be the required intensity of management to maintain conditions suitable for the Karner blue.

To sustain a viable metapopulation, such as the Albany Pine Bush area in New York, Givnish et al. (1988) and Schweitzer (1989, in press-a) suggest a minimum area of 2000 acres. In addition, Schweitzer (in press-a) suggests that a viable population in a pine barrens community should have a minimum of 1000 first-generation (3000-4000 second generation) Karner blue adults per deme, with at least 5 demes being present. Figures for minimum acreage and minimum population size have not yet been established for Karner blue metapopulations in oak savannas, but they are probably similar (Schweitzer in press-a). However, even populations of 1000 individuals or more are potentially at risk, as shown by the extinction of the Ontario population in 1989, which appeared linked to the drought of 1988 and the cool, wet spring of 1989 (Schweitzer in press-b, USFWS 1992).

### Causes of the Rangewide Decline

Several causes have been proposed for the rangewide decline in Karner blue numbers (Packer 1987, 1990, Schweitzer 1989, 1990, in press-a, Shuey in press, USFWS 1992). Some of the principal and often interrelated causes suggested for the decline are (1) habitat loss or fragmentation, resulting from tree planting projects or through agricultural, residential, and commercial development, and (2) loss of lupine, resulting from vegetational succession due to fire suppression. In addition, often at a more local level, Karner blue populations may decline due to (3) lupine grazing by deer and other wildlife, and (4) loss of those ant species that tend and protect Karner blue larvae. Many of the above reasons have been put forward for the decline of other lupine-feeding insects (Campbell et al. 1990, Packer 1990, Shuey et al. 1987), as well as for other insects when considered in a more general sense (Greatorex-Davies et al. 1992, Murphy et al. 1990, Panzer 1988, Pyle et al. 1981). Saunders et al. (1991) review the major changes that occur in the physical environment as a result of habitat fragmentation.

As an example of habitat loss through reforestation, consider the history of establishing red pine, *Pinus resinosa*, plantations on Michigan state forest land in Region II (i.e., the upper half of Michigan's lower peninsula). During the years 1910 to 1979, an estimated 214,000 acres of state forest land were planted to red pine in Region II, with 59% of this acreage being planted between the years 1925-1940 (Haack and Mattson 1993). Much additional acreage was planted on federal lands and private lands in this area. Moreover, during these same years, thousands of additional acres were planted to jack pine and white pine, *Pinus strobus*. Practically all plantations were established on abandoned farmland and in fields and forest openings (Shuey in press). This was an especially common practice during the years of the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-1942 (Merrill 1981).

Several of Michigan's Karner blue sites are close to hundreds of acres of pine plantations on state and federal lands. It may be possible to log and burn selected areas in these pine plantations to create a network of sites and corridors that will subsequently be colonized by lupine, Karner blue, and other associated organisms. Restoring pine plantations to prairie or savanna with the selective use of logging and fire could serve to mimic the effects of a hot crown fire (D. Schweitzer pers. comm.).

### Management Practices to Avoid

Even in areas with suitable habitat, Karner blue populations can be threatened by (1) applying herbicides that destroy lupine or nectar sources, (2) mowing during April through August, or (3) spraying insecticides that are harmful to Karner blue larvae, ants, or pollinators of the various nectar plants. In known Karner blue sites, managers should restrict the use of herbicides and insecticides along trails and roadsides.

### Management Practices to Encourage

Besides the minimum acreage issues discussed above, other practices to consider in managing Karner blue preserves include: (1) establishing dispersal corridors for adults, (2) creating openings (of various configurations with islands of trees remaining to provide some shade) to promote lupine and nectaring sources, (3) converting pine plantations to prairie, (4) propagating and planting lupine and nectaring sources as needed, (5) introducing or reintroducing Karner blues and/or ants as needed, (6) using fire and/or mowing to maintain or promote lupine growth (see below), and (7)

monitoring regularly populations of Karner blue, lupine, ants, and other associated sensitive species to assess the effectiveness of management treatments. In addition, private land owners should be informed about the Karner blue's presence on their properties, and they should be educated about practices that will favor the insect. Schweitzer (in press-b) provides guidelines on how to prioritize sites for protection activities. He advocates focusing on sites with more than 1000 second-generation adults per deme; where demes are or can be connected by way of foot-paths, dirt roads, or utility lines; and where a barrens/savanna community can be restored and maintained.

### **Fire and Mowing**

Given the Karner blue's endangered status, managers will need to consult frequently with state and federal biologists and obtain necessary permits before conducting prescribed burns because such actions could result in a "take" of the species. When considering fire as a management tool, note that all life stages of the Karner blue are vulnerable to mortality from fire. Even though fast moving, patchy fires should spare some individuals, Bleser (1992) reported that Karner blue egg and larval mortality were high in spring- or fall-burned sites. It is important, states Panzer (1988), to use fire cautiously when dealing with isolated pockets of rare invertebrates.

Fire can be used both to maintain sites in early successional stages that support lupine or to restore other sites back to such a successional stage (e.g., logging followed by burning). Preserves should be divided into several fire-management units, and only one or a few burned during any single year (Lawrence and Cook 1989). Schweitzer (in press-a) advocates using fire only in sites that can be divided into three or more burn units. If possible, only a portion of each opening should be burned, with emphasis placed on areas near to active Karner blue patches but not the occupied habitat itself. Such practices will reduce Karner blue mortality within any particular site as well as reduce the flight distance required for recolonization. In Wisconsin, first-generation Karner blue adults were seen on some sites that had been burned in spring of the same year, while most burned sites were recolonized to some level during the second-generation flight (Bleser 1992). Nevertheless, several years may be needed before some burned sites are recolonized.

Prescribed burns are usually done in early spring (before mid-April) or fall (after September) when most Karner blue individuals are eggs. However, Bleser (1992) suggests that burning in August may be useful because it (1) can occur during or soon after an assessment is made of Karner blue population size and location, and (2) could allow some adults to escape the fire and oviposit elsewhere. Although true, good burning conditions are rare in August because sites are typically too moist and green. Prescribed burns would also be useful in areas that are near Karner blue sites but that do not currently support these insects. Overall, prescribed burns should be conducted in concert with Karner blue population monitoring. In isolated areas with relatively small (<100) Karner blue populations, burning should not be practiced (Schweitzer 1990, in press-a). Moreover, all proposed management plans should be reviewed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Mowing should be considered in areas that are too small for burning, where burning is difficult to accomplish, or where Karner blue populations are small and isolated. Mowing has been effective in maintaining prairie habitats (Hover and Bragg 1981, Opler 1981), and in fact, the site of the world's largest Karner blue population (at the Saratoga County Airport, New York) has been maintained entirely through mowing for the past 15 years. Schweitzer (1990, in press-a) recommends mowing from August 15 through April 15, with a minimum blade height of 4 inches and allowing the clipped vegetation to fall in place because it may contain Karner blue eggs. Waiting until late September to mow may be better, especially in cool years when development is slowed and thus oviposition is delayed.

## Data Gaps

Although much is known about the Karner blue, there are still many gaps in our understanding of this insect (see Bleser 1992, Givnish et al. 1988, Packer 1990, Schweitzer 1990, in press-a,b). For example, further research is needed on:

### *Interaction studies*

1. Karner blue performance (e.g., larval growth rate, adult fecundity) on older versus younger plants, on new versus older foliage, on fertilized versus unfertilized plants, on shaded versus open-grown plants, on plants with and without *Rhizobium lupini*, etc.);
2. Karner blue-ant interactions, the extent to which larvae need ants, which ant species best protect larvae, whether adult females oviposit preferentially in habitats occupied by certain ant species, the impact of burning on ants, and how best to promote and manage ant populations;
3. The impact of natural enemies and disease organisms on Karner blue dynamics;
4. The positive and negative aspects of gypsy moth defoliation on Karner blue and lupine dynamics;
5. The amount of canopy cover where Karner blue, lupine, and nectaring plants drop out of oak savanna, pine barrens, and other communities;
6. Identification of those habitat attributes that best predict Karner blue occupancy and reproductive success;
7. The relations between lupine, Karner blue, and various ant species with soil, weather, and landform gradients;
8. A landscape-level analysis of Karner blue and lupine sites, using GIS and various ecological classification systems;

### *Karner blue issues*

9. Development of Karner blue life tables for different habitat types;
10. Dispersal and recolonization capabilities of Karner blue adults and barriers to their dispersal (see Givnish et al. 1988);
11. Methods to propagate, transport, and introduce Karner blue life stages into the field;
12. Whether any cluster of Karner blue populations is still behaving as a metapopulation;
13. The optimal size, spatial configuration, and juxtaposition of Karner blue sites to best promote a functioning metapopulation;
14. Fine-tuning of techniques to estimate Karner blue population size, including follow-up monitoring after initial surveys are conducted;
15. What constitutes the minimum viable population size (including population viability analysis; Boyce 1985), minimum habitat area, and critical habitat;
16. The susceptibility of Karner blue to *Bt* insecticidal sprays;
17. Historical studies that document long-term Karner blue population fluctuations in relation to weather and management practices.

### *Lupine issues*

18. The life cycle and requirements of lupine and its associated *Rhizobium*, how long lupine lives and how seeds are dispersed, when to burn/mow to best promote lupine, how to best propagate and seed lupine, and what other herbivores feed on lupine;

*Other biological and managerial issues*

19. The genetic structure of Karner blue, lupine, and *Rhizobium lupini* populations; and
20. Setting specific guidelines as to which sites to burn, mow, or conduct other management practices, when to do these activities, and how often to repeat them to enhance survival and recovery of Karner blue and other associated sensitive species;

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