

Making More Sense of the Skippers

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- Plain orange below
- The “witches”
- The “gang of 4”
- Tawny edges

Spreadwing Skippers

- Sootywings
- Cloudywings
- Duskywings
- Checkered Skippers

Making More Sense....more subgroups!

1. Skippers with “frosted” wings
2. Skippers with large yellow patches
3. “Bikini” skippers
(yellow patches in 2 pieces)
4. Skippers with chevrons
5. Autumn (or late summer) skippers
6. Miscellaneous (just 2!)

1. Skippers with “frosted” wings

- Predominantly black
- Frosting is lighter scaling on the outer margin of the hindwing below
- Two species

Common Roadside Skipper *Amblyscirtes vialis*

- Small (by skipper standards)
- Relatively uncommon in Illinois
- Likes barrens
- Main flight is early (May)
- Small summer brood
- Primarily seen south of Chicago

Dusted Skipper *Atrytonopsis hianna*

- Biggish (by skipper standards)
- Rare in Illinois
- Likes sandy areas
- Flies May into June
- Reported from 2 IBMN sites only (Iroquois and Thompson-Fulton Sand Prairie)
- Host plants big and little bluestem

2. Skippers with large yellow patches

- Medium size skippers
- Predominant color below is brown
- Above, typical orange/brown skippers
- Nearly half to most of the hindwing below is yellow
- Two species
- Both species have dark form females

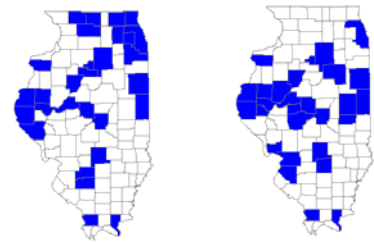
Hobomok Skipper *Poanes hobomok*

- A savanna/oak woodland species
- Flies in spring (May/June)
- Host plant: Switchgrass, other grasses

Zabulon Skipper *Poanes zabulon*

- An edge species
- Two generations: May and August
- More southerly than Hobomok
- Host plant: Love Grass, other grasses

Zabulon Skipper is more southerly than Hobomok



Hobomok

Zabulon

3. “Bikini” Skippers

- Yellow patches on hindwings below are in two distinct pieces
- One yellow patch is at the base of the hindwing
- There may be a small connection to the larger, distal patch in some individuals

Long Dash (Mystic Skipper) *Polites mystic*

- Found in sedge meadows
- Often in same places as “gang of four”
- Flies in June (earlier than other sedge meadow skippers)
- Seems less common than other sedge meadow skippers
- Host plants poorly known. Grasses including *Poa*

Peck's (Yellowpatch) Skipper *Polites coras*

- Not remnant-reliant. Fairly widespread.
- Multiple generations through summer
- Host plants are numerous grass species including rice cut grass

4. Chevron Skippers

- Two species
- Both show pale chevrons on a tan background
- Easily separated by flight time

Indian Skipper *Hesperia sassacus*

- Rare in Illinois
- To date, only reported from Iroquois
- Flies in late spring (May-mid June)
- Host plants: grasses including Panicum and Little Bluestem

Sachem *Atalopedes campestris*

- Not resident, migrates in each year
- Arrives late in season (mid-August on)
- May not breed at all this far north
- Host plant crabgrass
- Not remnant-reliant

5. Autumn or Late Summer Skippers

- Sachem could be in this group
- Two additional species, one migrant and one resident
- They look nothing alike- the grouping is due to flight time only

Fiery Skipper *Hylephila phyleus*

- Not resident, migrates in each year
- Very widespread (present in Chicago parks)
- Typically arrives in late summer
- Feeds on many weedy grasses
- Only local skipper with dark spots on a light background

Leonard's Skipper
Hesperia leonardus

- Rare in Illinois
- Found in dry savannas
- Host plant is switchgrass
- Found in Palos area

6. Miscellaneous Skippers

- They don't fit with any other group
- Both are important prairie species

Two-spotted Skipper
Euphyes bimacula

- Uncommon in Illinois
- Found in moist prairies with sedges
- Flies June into July
- Host plant reported to be *Carex trichocarpa*

Byssus Skipper
Problema byssus

- Found in mesic prairies
- Flies early summer
- Host plant a grass- but the only listed species doesn't grow in Illinois