

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

The Bay Skipper



Photo: David Sarkozi

A VANISHING BUTTERFLY

The Bay Skipper (*Euphyes bayensis*) is an extremely rare butterfly known only from Gulf Coast locations at Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. It was named after Bay St. Louis, where this skipper was originally determined to be a new species. But the population at its very namesake was likely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, and the Texas population may have been eliminated by Hurricane Ike. This fragile creature may persist in unknown locations and deserves a chance at survival by being granted federal protection.

PROTECTING COASTAL WETLANDS

The Bay Skipper depends on coastal wetlands to survive. Unfortunately, these wetlands have been greatly reduced by development and are on the frontline of more extreme and frequent storms due to climate change. Coastal wetlands boast high rates of biodiversity and protection for the Bay Skipper's habitat could provide safeguards for other animals and plants that depend on these rich habitats.

KNOW YOUR BUTTERFLY

- Butterfly Effect: protection for the Bay Skipper's habitat could safeguard human populations vulnerable to extreme hurricane events such as Hurricanes Katrina and Ike.
- Evolution: the Bay Skipper has an ancient evolutionary history and likely became a new species due to isolation when its wetlands habitat expanded and contracted from glacial cycles.
- Slipping through the cracks: the Fish & Wildlife Service once considered this butterfly to be a candidate for federal protection, but it dropped off the radar screen in 1996.

CLIMATE CHAOS

Extreme weather events such as hurricanes have destroyed some of the only populations of the Bay Skipper. Climate change is resulting in stronger and more frequent hurricanes.



The Bay Skipper's Range



Source: Butterflies & Moths of North America