

Poweshiek Skipperling (*Oarisma poweshiek*) and Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*)

The Poweshiek skipperling (*Oarisma poweshiek*) and Dakota skipper (*Hesperia dacotae*) are small butterfly species found in remnant pockets of native prairie in the north-central United States and south-central Canada. Both species are increasingly threatened by a wide array of anthropogenic activities and processes, ranging from habitat conversion to pesticide use to climate change.

In addition to implementing active habitat and population management efforts on the ground, experts managing both the Poweshiek skipperling and the Dakota skipper are now exploring options for intensive *ex situ* population management to improve the long-term status of these species in their native habitats. United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Minnesota Zoo invited the IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) to plan and facilitate a participatory workshop process. CBSG used the IUCN SSC *Guidelines on the Use of Ex Situ Management for Species Conservation* as an aid to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating an *ex situ* management element into the broader conservation activities for both species.



Poweshiek skipperling © Minnesota Zoo



Dakota skippers © Minnesota Zoo



Contact: Phil Delphey,
US Fish and Wildlife Service
phil_delphey@fws.gov

Workshop Results

The broad objectives of the workshop were to review the status of the species and the threats to their long-term persistence; define the role(s) that *ex situ* management could play in the overall conservation of the species; determine the characteristics of the *ex situ* population required to fulfill each potential role; identify the feasibility and risks associated with each potential *ex situ* role; and make an informed and transparent decision on if and how to utilize *ex situ* options in overall species conservation. Wild population management options were also considered. Participants chose a mixed approach to population management for both species, as shown below. **Click on the text in the table below to learn more about each approach and related actions.**

Poweshiek Skipperling
Establish a head-start program to augment extant locations for reinforcement (intra-site). Increase population size and recruitment in the wild. Increase survivorship during the most sensitive life stages, bypassing presumed high mortality in the early life stages.
Conduct research on a surrogate species to inform <i>ex situ</i> programs and also to inform land management decisions for Poweshiek skipperling.
Establish an insurance population (long-term goal based on breeding research).
Reintroduce to locations with historical records (inter-site), but are thought to be extirpated (long-term goal based on disease and parasite research).

Click [here](#) to view the action plan for population management of Poweshiek skipperling.

Dakota Skipper
Restoration of Dakota skipper at sites within the species' historical range where it has been extirpated.
Provision of Dakota skippers for research projects that are integral to the species' conservation.
Completion of a protocol that could be used by zoos or other facilities to manage the Dakota skipper <i>ex situ</i> .

Click [here](#) to view the action plan for population management of Dakota skipper.

Full workshop report available at: <http://www.cbsg.org/content/poweshiek-skipperling-and-dakota-skipper-ex-situ-assessment-and-planning-workshop-2015>

Workshop organized by: Minnesota Zoo

Workshop sponsors: United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Minnesota Zoo Foundation

Workshop design and facilitation: IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG)