Look-alikes

There are a number of more common butterflies that occur in similar habitats and are frequently mistaken for the Mitchell's satyr:

Appalachian Eyed brown
(Satyrodes eurydice)

- Larger
- Lighter brown, tan
- Lacks orange bands
- Extra eyespot on leading edge of hindwing

Wood nymph
(Cercyonis pegala)

- Larger, darker
- Only one or two eye spots on forewing
- Lacks orange bands

Little wood satyr
(Megisto cymela)

- Similar in size
- Only two eye spots per wing
- Lacks orange bands

* Butterflies on this page approximately life size

Private lands & Mitchell's satyr

Because the Mitchell's satyr occurs on private lands, landowner participation in conserving this endangered species is critical to successful species recovery. To learn about incentives for managing your land in ways that benefit this endangered species and protect your interests:

In Michigan:
MDNR Landowner Incentive Program:
(517) 373-1263
http://www.michigan.gov/dnrlip

USFWS Federal Private Lands Program:
http://endangered.fws.gov/landowner/index.html

Learn more:

The Mitchell's Satyr Habitat Conservation Plan

A plan is being developed to help conserve the butterfly and its habitat in Michigan and Indiana. For information on progress in conserving Mitchell's satyr, as well as background on its biology and habitat, visit:

http://www.michigan.gov/dnrnongame

In Michigan:
Endangered Species Coordinator
Phone : (517) 373-1263
Email: hogrefet@michigan.gov

In Indiana:
Lee Casebere - Indiana DNR
Phone : (317) 232-4053
Email: Lcasebere@dnr.in.gov

Michigan Natural Features Inventory

Mitchell's Satyr

Neonympha mitchellii mitchellii (French)

The Mitchell's satyr is protected under federal law because it is in danger of becoming extinct in the near future.

What does a Mitchell's satyr look like?

The Mitchell's satyr is a medium-sized, dark brown butterfly, with a wingspan that ranges from 1.5 inches to 1.75 inches . The undersides of its wings each have a row of four or five eye-spots, ringed by two orange bands. The three central eyespots on its hindwing are largest.

Where does it live?

The Mitchell's satyr is restricted to a unique type of wetland called a fen, that is fed by carbonate-rich ground water from seeps and springs. Typically, sites where it occurs are dominated by narrow-leaved sedges (such as *Carex stricta*), often in areas with scattered tamarack and poison sumac.

Photo: Daria Hyde

Why are Mitchell's satyrs so rare?

Loss of its unique wetland habitat is the greatest threat to the Mitchell's satyr—many sites have been altered or drained completely. Habitats were maintained historically by low-intensity fires and flooding by beavers. In the absence of these disturbances, trees, shrubs and invasives such as glossy buckthorn can shade out the satyr's food plant. Digging ponds, filling wetlands and installing drain tiles in adjacent fields can change water quality and flow through these wetlands.

Distribution

Although found in several states historically, the Mitchell's satyr is currently known from only 19 sites in southern Michigan and northern Indiana.

Life cycle . . .

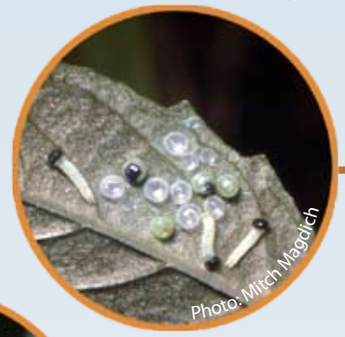

Photo: Mitch Magdich

Eggs

In July, females lay their miniscule eggs close to the ground, on tiny plants. The eggs hatch in seven to eleven days.

* Life cycle photos larger than actual size.

Photo: Mitch Magdich

Caterpillars

The caterpillars are very small and difficult to find. They feed on tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) and other fine-leaved sedges and grasses. The species overwinters as a caterpillar, close to the ground.

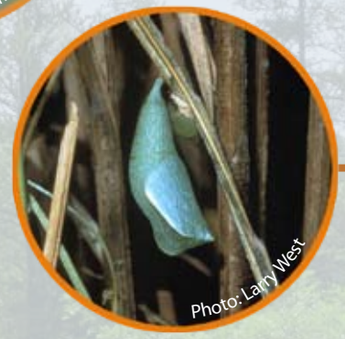

Photo: Larry West

Chrysalis

After overwintering, the caterpillars resume eating until they form a chrysalis in June. Although they do not eat or move, many changes occur internally.

Butterfly

The adult butterflies emerge from their chrysalises in late June and live for only a few weeks. Males emerge a few days before females. During their flight period, they mate, lay eggs, and die.

When can I see Mitchell's satyrs?

Mitchell's satyr adults fly for only three weeks in late June through mid-July. They are often seen flying low over vegetation, with a characteristic slow, bobbing flight.

Photo: Mindy Walker

Where can I see Mitchell's satyrs?

Sarrett Nature Center, in Benton Harbor, Michigan has a boardwalk for easy viewing of the satyr and its habitat.

For more information:
Phone: (269) 927-4832
http://www.sarett.com/