



## **INSECT SECTION**

### **KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY**

#### **ABOUT**

The Karner Blue butterfly is an endangered insect about the size of a postage stamp. The coloring of the male and female butterflies is different. The upper side of the male is silvery or dark blue with a thin black border, while the female's wings are more grayish brown with a border of irregular orange crescents. Their undersides are gray with a continuous band of orange crescents along the wing edges and scattered black spots that are circled in white. These butterflies produce offspring twice a year with the first caterpillars hatching in April. Karner Blue caterpillars eat only wild lupine leaves, while adult butterflies feed on the nectar of flowering plants. In mid-May the caterpillars pupate (go through a stage of transformation) and adult butterflies emerge from their chrysalides at the end of May or early June. These adults then mate and lay their eggs on wild lupine plants in June/July, which hatch the following April.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Karner Blue butterfly's habitat is being destroyed. Wooded areas are being turned into agricultural land, forest fires suppressed, shrubs and hardwood trees encouraged to take over their range, and logging and urbanization (development of towns) taking place in their usual habitats. For the Karner Blue to survive, its habitat needs natural disturbances (like wildfires and grazing by large mammals) to set back encroaching forests, which helps wild lupines and nectar plants the tiny butterfly so relies on for food to thrive. Because of the rarity and beauty of this species it is also very desirable for butterfly collections. However, it is illegal to collect one without a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Karner Blue butterfly was Federally listed as endangered in 1992 and is listed as such in Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, and Ohio. The largest remaining concentration of this butterfly is in Wisconsin where they have implemented a successful statewide habitat conservation plan.

For more detailed information visit: [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) or [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org).

#### **TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

What plant does the Karner Blue Butterfly need to survive?

- a. Dandelion
- b. Azalea
- c. Pine tree
- d. Wild Lupine

Answer is D.

