

Miami Blue – Hurricane Response BMP's

Specific islands: The Marquesas (Key West National Wildlife Refuge); northern Snipe Key (Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge)

Habitat: Coastal berms and dunes

Physical Description: The Miami blue is a small, sexually dimorphic butterfly approximately 0.8 to 1.1 inches (in) (1.9 to 2.9 centimeters [cm]) in length, with a forewing length of 0.3 to 0.5 in (8.0 to 12.5 millimeters). Wings of males are blue above (dorsally), with a narrow black outer border and white fringes; females are bright blue dorsally, with black borders and an orange/red and black eyespot near the anal angle of the hindwing. The underside (ventral side) is grayish, with darker markings outlined with white and bands of white wedges near the outer margin. The ventral hindwing has two pairs of eyespots, one of which is capped with red; basal and costal spots on the hindwing are black and conspicuous.

The Miami blue is similar in appearance to three other sympatric (occupying the same or overlapping geographic areas, without interbreeding) butterfly species that occur roughly in the same habitats: cassius blue, ceraunus blue, and nickerbean blue. Please refer to Figure 1 below, to compare these various species.



Actions to minimize impacts of hurricane clean-up efforts:

1. Avoid destroying or disturbing the species hostplants, blackbead (*Pithecellobium* spp.) and nickerbean (*Caesalpinia* spp.).

2. Prior to any clean up or restoration activities, contractors should be instructed on the identification of the butterfly and its hostplants to ensure these plants are not treated with herbicide or hand pulled during the project.
3. If hostplants are trimmed or pulled, all clipped/pulled vegetation should be left near adjacent live hostplants for 24 hours so as to allow any larvae present to relocate on to the remaining vegetation.

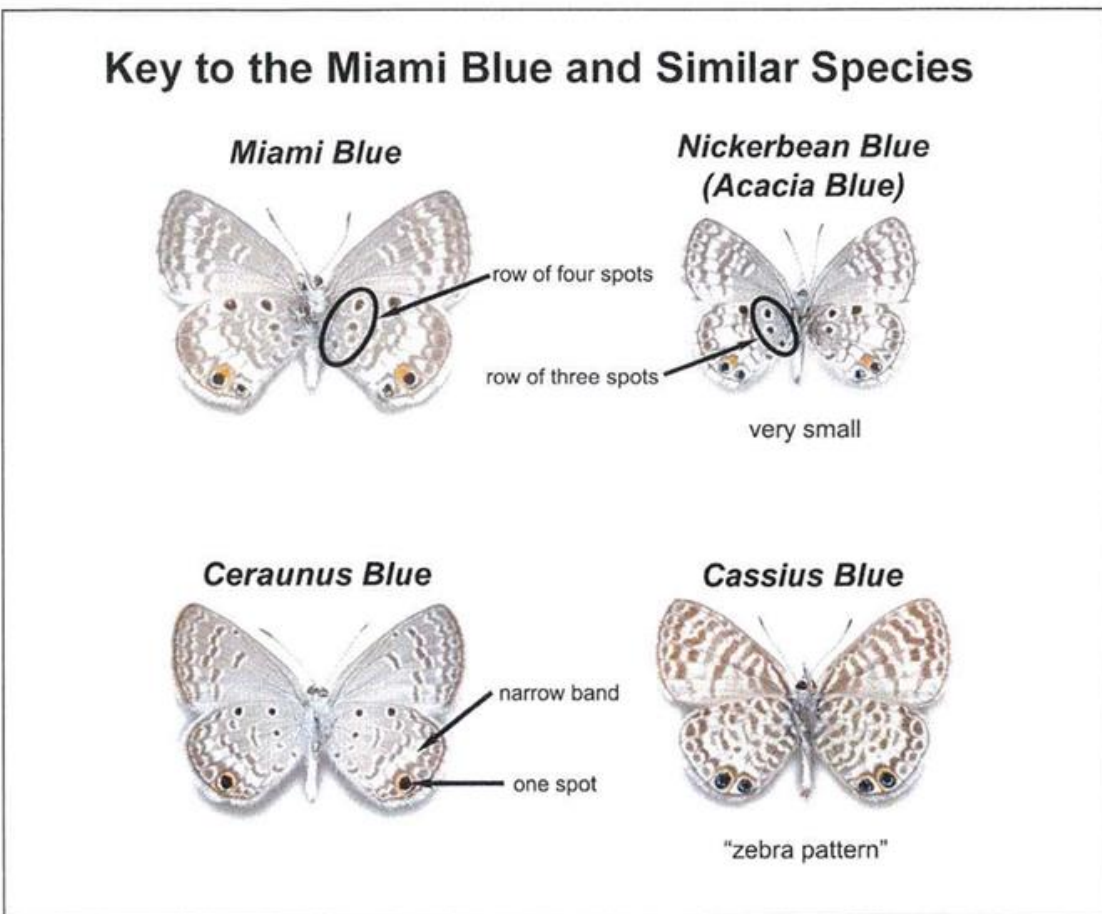


Figure 1. Distinguishing Miami blue from similar species.