



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM**

**TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW Time (7:11)**

**KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY (HOST – SARAH LEON WITH CATHY CARNES)**

This transcript was produced from audio provided by FWS Endangered Species Program

**P R O C E E D I N G S**

(Music plays.)

MS. LEON: Hello, there. This is Sarah Leon for the Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm on the phone today with Cathy Carnes, the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Team Coordinator at the Green Bay Ecological Services Office. Hi, Cathy, how are you today?

MS. CARNES: Good, thank you.

MS. LEON: Great. And Cathy, I was just hoping that you wouldn't mind speaking with us about some of the work you're doing with the Karner Blue Butterfly.

MS. CARNES: I'd be glad to.

MS. LEON: Would you mind starting with some facts about this species?

MS. CARNES: Sure. The Karner Blue Butterfly was listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1992. This is a species that depends on early successional habitat, oak savannah, and pine barrens and the habitat also must include the host plant of the Karner Blue Butterfly larvae which is wild lupine, so again the habitat is oak savannahs, pine barrens with wild lupine.

We find those habits throughout seven states that still support the Karner Blue Butterfly. Those are New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

MS. LEON: Can you just bring our listeners up to speed on the current status of the Karner Blue?

MS. CARNES: Sure. If I look across the seven state range of the Karner Blue, I'd have to say overall the status is stable. However, in New York and Indiana, there have been some long-term downward trends in numbers of butterflies that they're monitoring on their transects. We we're a little concerned about Indiana and New York. The populations there are smaller and more at risk to loss because of their small size, because of other threats that occur in the area such as commercial and residential development. We have less of those threats in Wisconsin and Michigan where we have larger numbers of Karner Blue Butterfly populations and larger areas where those populations can be recovered. So again, there are some downward trends in Indiana and New York and actually we're starting to see some in Michigan, but not many.

There is a state-wide habitat conservation plan for the Karner Blue Butterfly in effect in Wisconsin. It has grown from 26 to 40 partners since initiation of the habitat conservation plan in 1999 and very successful. The State of Michigan has a state-wide HCP that they're working on finalizing and hopefully that will be done this year.

MS. LEON: Earlier you mentioned the relationship between the Karner Blue Butterfly and wild blue lupine. Can you go ahead and elaborate on this and is this dependency proving to be a major obstacle when working to recover the species?

MS. CARNES: No, wild lupine isn't a major obstacle working with the species. It's an integral part of the ecosystem so we need it there. Karner Blue Butterfly larvae only feed on wild lupine which is a legume. It's in the pea family. It's a beautiful plant, palmate leaves and bright purple, pink, to white flowers. It is a native species of oak savannahs and pine barrens so it's not uncommon to find it there. However, some of our Karner sites are lacking sufficient lupine and nectar plants so a lot of the restoration effort include restoring habitat for the Karner Blue Butterfly which involves seeding the area with lupine and nectar plants.

There's also another interesting piece of life history with the species. The larvae of the Karner Blue Butterfly are tended by ants. So one way you can find the larvae of these butterflies which again are on the leaves of lupine plants is to follow the ants. And the ants collect the sweet substance that's exuded by the glands of the caterpillar and in return we think they provide protection for the caterpillar by warding off diseases such as fungus, perhaps some predators such as robber fly. Another thing I did want to mention is as part of the recovery efforts that are going on for this butterfly include reintroductions in three states. That's Ohio, Michigan, and New Hampshire, and population augmentations in two other states, Indiana and New York. And we have great partners working with us on these reintroductions and augmentations.

MS. LEON: I also understand that there's a lot of public support backing this species' recovery. Can you tell us a little bit about this?

MS. CARNES: Yes, I think PNC and the state partners have done a very good job across the species range in alerting the public to the plight of the Karner Blue and soliciting their support. Some of the states have involved school children in helping to grow and raise the plant lupine. There have been other voluntary efforts like in Michigan right now here in Manistee National Forest has quite a large voluntary group that helps them do Karner Blue Butterfly monitoring activities in the summer and that group has grown substantially in the last year.

The Wisconsin state-wide Karner Blue Butterfly HPC outreaches to the public. It has what we call a participation strategy that works on getting voluntary conservation from private landowners for the Karner Blue Butterfly. It does that by giving them automatic permit coverage for any take that may occur on their land and actually a lot of private landowners have helped us in recovery efforts with the Karner Blue Butterfly. And those efforts include such things as planting lupine and nectar plants on their property, to restore prairies, savannahs, or pine barrens. It's been a very good thing interfacing the public.

MS. LEON: All right, and do Karner Blue recovery actions actually benefit any other species?

MS. CARNES: Oh, yes. By restoring habitat for the Karner Blue which again are oak savannahs and pine barrens, you are restoring a habitat that's considered globally imperilled and there are many species that count on oak savannah ecosystems and those include the Frosted Elfin Butterfly, the Slender Glass Lizard, the Flox Moth, the Black Turtle, the North Flicker, the Sharp-Toe (Inaudible). Yes, by restoring habitats for the Karner Blue we are restoring imperilled ecosystem that will benefit a whole host of other species.

MS. LEON: And now for the big question, why should people care about this species' recovery?

MS. CARNES: Oh, there's a lot of reasons they care. They're part of the food web. Butterflies feed birds. They're aesthetically beautiful. They're pollinators which is necessary if we want to eat. They're plant pollinators. I think they're just an integral part of ecosystems and we need to keep all the pieces of our ecosystem intact, to be working properly. There's many reasons why we should support the recovery of this species.

MS. LEON: Great. Well, thank you, Cathy, for taking some time from your day to tell us a little bit about some of the work that you're doing. The Karner Blue is such a beautiful little creature, so keep up the good work.

MS. CARNES: Thank you very much.

MS. LEON: This is Sarah Leon for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you for listening.

(Music plays, whereupon, the interview is concluded.)