



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## *News Release*

### **Great Lakes Region**

5600 American Boulevard West  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55437

**Date:** January 23, 2020

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### **Draft Recovery Plan for Dakota Skipper Available for Comment**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public comment on a draft plan to recover the Dakota skipper, a prairie butterfly listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2014. The draft plan outlines general management actions and criteria that indicate when the Dakota skipper may be recovered and removed from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

Recovery plans are used by federal and state agencies and conservation partners to guide voluntary actions to recover threatened and endangered species to the point that ESA protections are no longer needed. The draft plan for the Dakota skipper includes actions such as land management to improve habitat quality and zoo-rearing for reintroductions to bring the Dakota skipper back to extirpated sites.

The Dakota skipper is a small butterfly about 1 inch in length. Skippers are butterflies with a thick body and faster, more powerful flight than most other butterflies. The Dakota skipper is found in remnants of tallgrass and mixed-grass prairie in the north-central United States (Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota) and into southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba provinces of Canada. This butterfly declined historically when prairies were transformed for agriculture, but more recent and dramatic declines have occurred since the late 1990s. Those declines were likely caused by loss and degradation of remnant prairies, pesticide use and climate change.

The Service is working with states, tribes, zoos and private landowners and managers to carry out recovery actions for the Dakota skipper. Dakota skippers are a microcosm of the larger worldwide decline of pollinators and other insects. Studying and responding to the loss of Dakota skippers will help address the larger issue of insect decline. Additionally, prairies are one of the most threatened ecosystems worldwide. Recovering Dakota skippers means improving and expanding high-quality prairie ecosystems for future generations.

The draft recovery plan for the Dakota skipper is available at our [Dakota skipper website](#). Comments will be accepted through February 24, 2020. Written comments may be submitted by U. S. mail to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office, Attention: Sarah Quamme, 4101 American Blvd. East, Bloomington, Minn., 55425. Comments may also be faxed to 952-646-2873, Attention: Sarah Quamme. Email comments may be sent to [sarah\\_quamme@fws.gov](mailto:sarah_quamme@fws.gov). Please include “Dakota Skipper DRP” in the subject line.

For additional information about the Dakota skipper, please visit our [Dakota skipper website](#).

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.*

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