

## Poladryas minuta (Dotted Checkerspot)

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Steve Cary,

### Taxonomy

- **Class:** INSECTA
- **Order:** LEPIDOPTERA
- **Family:** NYMPHALIDAE
- **Genus:** Poladryas
- **Scientific Name:** *Poladryas minuta* (Edwards, 1861)
- **Common Name:** Dotted Checkerspot
- **Synonyms:** *Melitaea minuta* Edwards, 1861  
Edwards, 1861
- **Taxonomic Name Source:** Pelham, J. P. 2008. A catalogue of the butterflies of the United States and Canada with a complete bibliography of the descriptive and systematic literature. *The Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera*. Volume 40. 658 pp. Revised 14 February, 2012.

### Agency Status

- **NMDGF:**
- **Federal Status:**
- **BLM Sensitive:**
- **USFS:**
- **IUCN Red List:** [Not Evaluated](#)
- **Nature Serve Global:** [G5](#)
- **NHNM State:** S2
- **NM Endemic:** NO

### Description

Of medium-size, Dotted Checkerspot is unicolorous orange above with a black web of veins and transverse marks. Underneath, the hindwing has alternating bands of orange and white, accented with bold black marks. The orange band is wider than that seen on *arachne*.

Description courtesy of Steven J. Cary, [Butterflies of New Mexico](#), 2024

### Habitat and Ecology

This butterfly inhabits limestone ridges in shortgrass prairies and mesquite woodlands (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999, Glassberg 2001). In New Mexico it is found between elevations of 1,524 to 1,981 m in the northeastern and east-

central plains (Cary and Toliver 2024).

As larvae, the hostplants are Figworts (Scrophulariaceae) and Beardtongues (*Penstemon* spp.) (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999, Glassberg 2001, Cary and Toliver 2024). They prefer plants with green, thin leaves; for example, Beardtongues with thick or gray leaves are not eaten (Scott 1986). In Northeast New Mexico they are found on *Penstemon jamesii* and *Penstemon albidus* (Cary and Toliver 2024). An average of 38 eggs are laid on the underside of hostplants (Scott 1986), Larvae are gregarious and eat leaves, third stage larvae hibernate (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999, Glassberg 2001).

The species has multiple flights with two generations every year (Scott 1986, Cary and Toliver 2024) Flights start in May and last till late September, New Mexico records stretch from May 10 to October 2nd, with peak numbers in May and another peak in August through September (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999, Glassberg 2001, Cary and Toliver 2024). Adults are known to nectar on yellow composites in the order Asterales (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999) and have also been recorded on the flowers of asters and Black-Eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*) (Opler and Wright 1999). When looking for females, males perch on low vegetation on limestone ridgetops from around 7:00 am to 12:30 pm then patrol around flowers for the rest of the day. (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999, Cary and Toliver 2024). Males will fly behind the female waiting for her to land to mate, unreceptive females will fly or crawl away. Males live an average of 5 days in nature and through mark and recapture studies have been shown to occupy an average area of 100 m (Scott 1986).

## **Geographic Range:**

The Dotted Checkerspot is a shortgrass prairie specialist living near limestone ridges in the United States and Mexico. The northernmost part of its range is southeast Colorado and northeast New Mexico (Scott 1986, Cary and Toliver 2024). The range continues south through Texas and New Mexico before ending in Chihuahua and Zacatecas, Mexico (Scott 1986, Opler and Wright 1999, Glassberg 2001). In New Mexico it is found between 1,524 to 1,981 m in elevation in the northeastern and east-central plains, with historical records in the following counties: Colfax, Curry, De Baca, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Union (Cary and Toliver 2024).

## **Conservation Considerations:**

There are no known range wide conservation actions in place for this butterfly. The subspecies found in New Mexico,