Euphydryas anicia (Anicia Checkerspot)

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Taxonomy

- **Class**: INSECTA
- **Order**: LEPIDOPTERA
- **Family**: NYMPHALIDAE
- **Genus**: Euphydryas
- **Scientific Name**: *Euphydryas anicia* (E. Doubleday, 1847)
- **Common Name**: Anicia Checkerspot
- **Synonyms**: Melitaea anicia E. Doubleday, 1847 E. Doubleday, 1847
- **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**: Least Concern
- **Nature Serve Global**: G5
- **NHNM State**: S3
- **NM Endemic**:NO

Description

Anicia Checkerspot is checkered all over with bands of red, white and black spots. Many different geographic races have been described based on local variations.

Description courtesy of Steven J. Cary, Butterflies of New Mexico, 2024

Habitat and Ecology

The Anicia Checkerspot is found in a variety of habitats, from drier open foothill shrub-scrub to high grasslands and alpine summits (Glassberg 2017, Pyle and LaBar 2018). Larvae usually feed on plants in the Snapdragon or Figwort

Family (Scrophulariaceae), such as paintbrushes (*Castilleja* spp.), alpine besseya (*Besseya alpina*), and penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.) (Cullenward *et al*. 1979, Cary and Toliver 2022, Glassberg 2017). Depending on altitude and latitude, the adult flight period can be from March through August, though in most areas it is June to July (Glassberg 2017). Adults nectar on a variety of plants, including buckwheat species (Polygonaceae) and asters (Asteraceae) (Cullenward *et al*. 1979), chokecherry blossoms (*Prunus virginiana*), penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.), and stonecrop (*Sedum* spp.) (Pyle and LaBar 2018).

Geographic Range:

The Anicia Checkerspot (*Euphydryas anicia*) is widespread throughout much of western North America, in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. It occurs from Alaska and the Yukon in the north to Sonora in the south, and from the West Coast east to the Rocky Mountains (Cary and Toliver 2022, Glassberg 2017). It is found from 450 to 4,400 metres in elevation (GBIF.org 2022).

Conservation Considerations:

There are no species-level conservation measures in place for the Anicia Checkerspot. Population numbers should continue to be tracked through monitoring programs, such as the North American Butterfly Monitoring Network. Several subspecies are narrow endemics and/or have experienced marked declines, including *Euphydryas anicia variicolor* in California. This has lead to several subspecies being petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including Morand's Checkerspot (*E. a. morandi*), which is endemic to Nevada. One subspecies endemic to New Mexico, the Sacramento Mountains Checkerspot (*E. a. cloudcrofti*) is federally protected as an Endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (NatureServe 2024). Many other subspecies in New Mexico may be in decline, such as *E. a. capella*, which has not been verified extant in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in many years.

Threats:

There are no range-wide threats documented for this species. Localized threats may be present in some portions of the range. For example, the Sacramento Mountains Checkerspot butterfly, sub-species *Euphydryas anicia cloudcrofti,* is threatened by climate change related drought, urban development, livestock grazing, and recreational use (Center for Biological Diversity 2021). In general, butterflies in the western US are seen in fewer numbers each year, due to a myriad of threats, such as climate change (Forister *et al.* 2021). Therefore, more information is needed to ensure populations of this species remain stable.

Population:

The population size and trend for this species are not known. The population appears stable, as a large number of occurrences have been reported in the last 10 years (GBIF.org 2024). However, some subspecies have experienced declines, so monitoring is necessary to ensure declines are not ongoing. As this is primarily a montane species, it may be at risk to the impacts of climate change (Forister *et al.* 2010).

References:

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More Information