

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Invertebrate Abstract**

**Element Code:** IILEP79080

**Data Sensitivity:** No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Atrytonopsis cestus*

**COMMON NAME:** Cestus skipper; Baboquivari skipper.

**SYNONYMS:**

**FAMILY:** HesperIIDae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** Edwards, 1884.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** Southern Arizona.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** Unknown

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** There are 6-20 species in this genus.

**DESCRIPTION:** A dark medium sized skipper with a wingspan of 1 3/8 to 1 1/2 inches (3.5-3.9 cm). The wing fringes are checkered. The upper side is dark brown and the forewing has large clear spots. The hind wing has a short row of 4 spots that are not in line. The underside is lighter brown with upper side spots repeated. According to Scott (1986) the large white postbasal spots and jagged underside postmedian band are distinctive.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** According to Scott (1986) the large white postbasal spots and jagged underside postmedian band are distinctive.

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Color photo (Opler *in* <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/byflyusa/usa/453.htm>).  
Color photo (*in* <http://www.nearctica.com/butter/plate31/Acestus.htm>).  
Color photo (Tingley 1997 *in* <http://www.geocities.com/~stubird/leps/AZLep009.html>).  
Black and white drawing (Tilden, 1986:pl. 41).  
Black and white drawing (Bailowitz, 1991).  
Color photo (*In* [http://nitro.biosci.arizona.edu/zeeb/butterflies/figs/Butterflies/HesperIIDae/e/A\\_cestus.jpg](http://nitro.biosci.arizona.edu/zeeb/butterflies/figs/Butterflies/HesperIIDae/e/A_cestus.jpg))

**TOTAL RANGE:** Baboquivari mountains and adjacent foothills, according to Scott (1986). Bailowitz and Brock (1991) include the Atacosas, Tumacaoris, Santa Catalinas and Galiuros.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** See “Total Range.”

### **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**BIOLOGY:** They are non migratory but presumably disperses among habitat patches. The adults are diurnal. The larva almost certainly hibernates and may aestivate as well. Scott (1986) reports flights in mid April to mid May and in late August; Bailowitz and Brock (1991) give 14 April to 30 May and 16 August to 2 October. There might be other flights as well, if so probably about late June and perhaps later in October. Larvae and pupa of course must occur between adult flight seasons. (NatureServe). This species often flies with *A.edwardsi*. On slightly overcast days, adults may be seen through the afternoon at nectar. Morning perching is done in the “jet plane” position. Females are rarely encountered. Unlike most butterflies, skippers pupate in a cocoon of leaves and silken strands. Their rapid, direct and bouncing flight is aptly suggested by the name “skipper”.

**REPRODUCTION:** From early morning to around noon, males perch on south facing slopes of gullies to wait for females.

**FOOD HABITS:** The adults are nectivores and the immatures are herbivores. The food plants of the larva are undocumented but obviously grasses or sedges. Most habitat specialist HESPERIINAE feed on several of the major grasses in the habitat. Adults must utilize a variety of flowers including *Baccharis* and *Opuntia* given the long flight season. (NatureServe).

**HABITAT:** The habitat is upper Sonoran grassy thorn forest and open woodland according to Scott (1986). Bailowitz and Brock (1991) state that it is “confined to the upper limits of the saguaro belt, as it blends into mesquite grassland.” Gullies and canyons in thorn scrub grasslands (Opler, 1999).

**ELEVATION:** Unknown

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Unknown

**POPULATION TRENDS:** They are critically imperiled globally because of their extreme rarity.

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:**

**STATE STATUS:**

**OTHER STATUS:**

Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3  
1999)

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** All populations and their habitat should be conserved wherever found.

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:** Unknown

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Studies need to be performed to learn adult nectar sources and larval food plants.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:**

## **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **REFERENCES:**

- Bailowitz, R. A. et al. 1991. Butterflies of Southeastern Arizona. Sonoran Arthropod Studies, Inc, Tucson, Arizona. pp. 92.  
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### **MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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