



Mission Blue Butterfly

Class	Order	Family	Species
Insecta	Lepidoptera	Lycaenidae	<i>Plebejus icarioides missionensis</i>

Range	Reproduction	Special Adaptations
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San Bruno Mountain in San Mateo County, Fort Baker (at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge) in Marin County and on Twin Peaks in San Francisco, California.

Growth: complete metamorphosis
Egg: laid on the leaves or terminal buds of the lupine from late March to early July. Hatch soon after being laid (in about 4-7 days) depending on temperature).
Larva: feed on the food plant for a short time, when they are about half grown they crawl to the base of the plant where they spin a silken chamber. They remain in a dormant condition throughout the winter. In February to April they come out and continue to eat until full grown.
Pupa: about 2 weeks
Adult: emerges in late March to early July to mate and repeat they cycle. Only one generation per year.

Many of the caterpillars in this family of butterflies posses glands which secrete sweet substances that attract ants. The ants feed on the sweet substance and in return protect the caterpillars from predation. The Mission Blue has these glands but the degree to which they are associated with ants is not known.

Habitat
Temperate regions

Physical Characteristics

Niche
The caterpillars of the Mission Blue feed only on lupine plants. The species requires very specialized environments found only in the coastal Bay Area.

	Adult	Caterpillar
Mouthparts:	siphoning/sucking	chewing
Wings:	2 pair	none
Legs:	3 pair	3 pair, 5 pair fleshy prolegs
Larva:	green	
Adult:	Wingspan of 25mm. The male is iridescent blue on the upper wings with narrow black and white margins. The female is primarily brown with some iridescent blue overlay. The underside of the wings of both sexes are gray and brown with dark spots.	

Sources
(23) (38) (39) (40) (41)

Diet
Nature: caterpillar feeds only on lupine plants (<i>lupinus albifrons</i> variety <i>collinus</i>)

Conservation Concerns
The Mission Blue is and endangered species and has been on the Endangered Species List since 1976. The species was first described in 1937 on Twin Peaks in San Francisco and probably use to live in much of the San Francisco Bay Area. Due to urbanization, much of the habitat that these butterflies need to survive has been destroyed. Note: It is illegal to remove any specimens from the wild because of their Endangered Species status.

