

Dakota Skipper and Poweshiek Skipperling Surveys: **FY13**  
PROJECT UPDATE

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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It has been widely anticipated that the Dakota skipper and Poweshiek skipperling would be proposed for listing per the Endangered Species Act. Identifying these two species is difficult and requires an experienced observer and proper survey conditions. With the October 2013 proposed listing of the Dakota skipper as threatened, and the Poweshiek skipperling as endangered, this project sought to confirm if habitat, or target butterflies, were present on FWS lands throughout both North and South Dakota, in their historic ranges. Station Biologists provided a list of properties within each Wetland Management District to be surveyed.

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## OBJECTIVES AND ALTERNATIVES

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Project sought to document presence or absence of appropriate habitat and target species. The final product, due by January 31, 2014, will include GPS of exact survey locations. This information will inform management decisions for those lands, and future conservation planning. It also serves to inform Ecological Services in their selection of Critical Habitat.

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## METHODS AND PROTOCOLS

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Surveys were completed per protocols provided by Ecological Services (ES) species specialists in charge of the listing packages. Bids were solicited from all species experts deemed qualified by ES.

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## DATA ANALYSIS / MODELS

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Data analysis includes a simple presence/absence. A complete list of appropriate vegetation, and other butterflies observed was provided. Shapefiles will be provided to better understand exact survey areas. Documenting exact survey locations is important for reporting where the species is not located.

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## DATA MANAGEMENT

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Data was provided in report format. Preliminary report was provided to all affected Wetland Management Districts and I & M Biologist. Shapefiles, when available, will also be provided to the same positions.

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## PARTNERS

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Three Wetland Management Districts were provided information about fee title lands within their Districts this year. If continued, an additional three Wetland Management Districts will be surveyed in 2014. Ecological Services has assisted in the contracts, and is benefiting from the results.

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## SOURCES OF SUPPORT

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Wetland Management District Biologists provided the list of Waterfowl Production Areas to survey, and maps appropriate for the contractors use.

### CURRENT STATUS

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Surveys were completed in the appropriate chronological and weather windows in the middle portion of the Dakotas. This included ten properties in Sand Lake, Arrowwood, and Tewaukon Wetland Management Districts. Waterfowl Production Areas included: Dewald, Stephan, Buntrock, Charley-Harley, Weisser, Hartleben, Biggs, Gunness, Krause, and Haven.

Most area were found to support suitable habitat on at least a portion of the Waterfowl Production Area. However, neither target butterfly species was documented on any of the areas surveyed.

### CHALLENGES

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The requested amount was based on surveys which Region 3 Ecological Services contracted out in Minnesota during the 2012 field season. However, bids received were two to three times higher for the work in the Dakotas. Only one area could be surveyed with the money received, so the middle unit which has been the least surveyed was selected for work to be done in the 2013 field season. Some of this difficulty was believed to be due to the late release of the money. Therefore, a second request for bids was issued. In order to complete surveys on a second area, an additional \$6000 is needed.

### MORE INFORMATION

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### LITERATURE CITATION

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HDR preliminary report dated August 1, 2013