SANDHILL CELLOPHANE BEE
Colletes ultravalidus

Order: Hymenoptera
Family: Colletidae
FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2?
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none

Description: This species may be confused with other similarly-sized bees by a non-entomologist. It is most similar to *Colletes validus*, but can be distinguished by the longer malar or "cheek" area.

Similar Species: Several other bees would appear similar to this species would appear similar to a non-specialist.

Habitat: This species appears to require sandhill, or at least xeric habitat since one locality was in scrubby flatwoods, and nearby wetlands that support early-blooming Ericaceae, such as *Pieris phyllyreifolia* and *Vaccinium* spp.

Seasonal Occurrence: This species is active from late December through early April.

Florida Distribution: This species is primarily known from the Panhandle, from Okaloosa to Leon and Wakulla counties, but there is one record for Goethe State Forest in Levy County.

Range-wide Distribution: This species is known primarily from northern Florida, but there are a couple of records from Georgia and Mississippi.

Conservation Status: This species is known from less than 10 occurrences in the northern part of the state and appears to require well-managed sandhill habitat adjacent to wetlands with Ericaceae and usually climbing fetterbush (*Pieris phyllyreifolia*). Although it is a large bee that is readily identifiable from reasonable images, it may be under surveyed for because of it's winter to early spring activity period. More information is needed before assigning a more definitive rank.

Protection and Management: This species appears to be most abundant in open sandy areas in sandhill habitat, so prescribed fire would likely be necessary for this species.

References: Hall et al. 2016

Sandhill Cellophane Bee ***Colletes ultravalidus***

female © DT Almquist

female © DT Almquist

Sandhill Cellophane Bee ***Colletes ultravalidus***

male © DT Almquist

burrow mounds © DT Almquist