

NICKERBEAN BLUE

Cyclargus ammon

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Lycaenidae

FNAI Ranks: G4/S1

U.S. Status: none

FL Status: none



Description: Very small butterfly (forewing length averages 9.14 mm). Dorsal surfaces of wings are blue with white edges interrupted by intermittent black lines. Females have extensive black coloration reaching into the blue interior of the dorsal surfaces of each wing. At the base of the dorsal hindwing are two black spots, the outermost one with a reddish-orange spot above that is larger than the black spot. The ventral surface of the hindwing is gray overall with several rows of dark markings. The ventral hindwing also has two black spots (one with an orange spot above that is larger than the black spot), and has three dark spots near the base, which are diagnostic. Easily confused with Miami blue (*Cyclargus thomasi bethunebakeri*).

Similar Species: Ceraunus blue (*Hemiargus ceraunus antibubastus*) has clean white edges to both the forewing and hindwing, lacks orange above the black spot on the dorsal hindwing, and has four dark spots at the base of the ventral hindwing. The Miami blue (*Cyclargus thomasi bethunebakeri*) is very similar but is larger (average forewing length is 12.31 mm) and has four dark spots at the base of the hindwing on the ventral side. See Calhoun et al. 2002 and Matthews et al. 2018 for detailed descriptions and comparisons of all life stages of nickerbean blue and Miami blue.

Habitat: Restricted to pine rockland habitat on Big Pine Key (Calhoun et al. 2002, Minno et al. 2005).

Seasonal Occurrence: Adults have been observed during every month of the year (Calhoun et al. 2002).

Florida Distribution: In Florida, only known from Big Pine Key and two incidental sightings on Bahia Honda, Monroe County.

Range-wide Distribution: The Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, Turks and Caicos, and the Florida Keys (Calhoun et al. 2002, Matthews et al. 2018).

Conservation Status: Listed as federally threatened in 2012 because of its similarity to the Miami blue (*Cyclargus thomasi bethunebakeri*).

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Protection and Management: Additional research into the identification and proper management of host plants is needed. Advocate planting native host and nectar plants in residential gardens.

References: Calhoun et al. 2002, Minno et al. 2005, Matthews et al. 2018



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Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 2000

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