

Notes

Field Notes on *Clossiana improba harryi* Ferris (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae)

This species was described in 1984 (Ferris, C. D., Bull. Allyn Mus. 89:1-7) from specimens collected in 1982 by Jack L. Harry of Salt Lake City, Utah. Field collecting by Ferris in 1984 and in 1985 by Lisa Snyder from the Audubon Ecology Camp of the West (University of Wyoming Trail Lake Ranch), near Dubois, Wyoming, has increased our knowledge of this species with respect to its behavior and geographic distribution.

This butterfly is a denizen of remote, high-alpine areas (above 11,000' (3355 m)) as shown in the type locality photograph (Fig. 1). It flies in early August, and was known originally only from the vicinity of Mt. Chauvenet in the Wind River Range of central-western Wyoming in Fremont Co. The type locality is situated in the Popo Agie Primitive Area of the Shoshone National Forest. *C. i. harryi* was described originally as occurring in eleven colonies extending for approximately 4.5 miles along the Bears Ears Trail. In 1984, I found that the distribution in this region is not discrete, but rather continuous from west of Adams Pass to west of Mt. Chauvenet. In 1985, Snyder discovered two additional colonies of *harryi* in the Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area at Goat Flat and Ram Flat. These localities are respectively 40 and 45 air miles NW of the type locality, also in the Shoshone National Forest in Fremont Co. Figure 2 is a map of this butterfly's range, as currently known.

The habitat of this species is in relatively level, somewhat xeric, areas of granitic



Fig. 1. Type locality (looking to the West) and typical habitat of *C. improba harryi*.

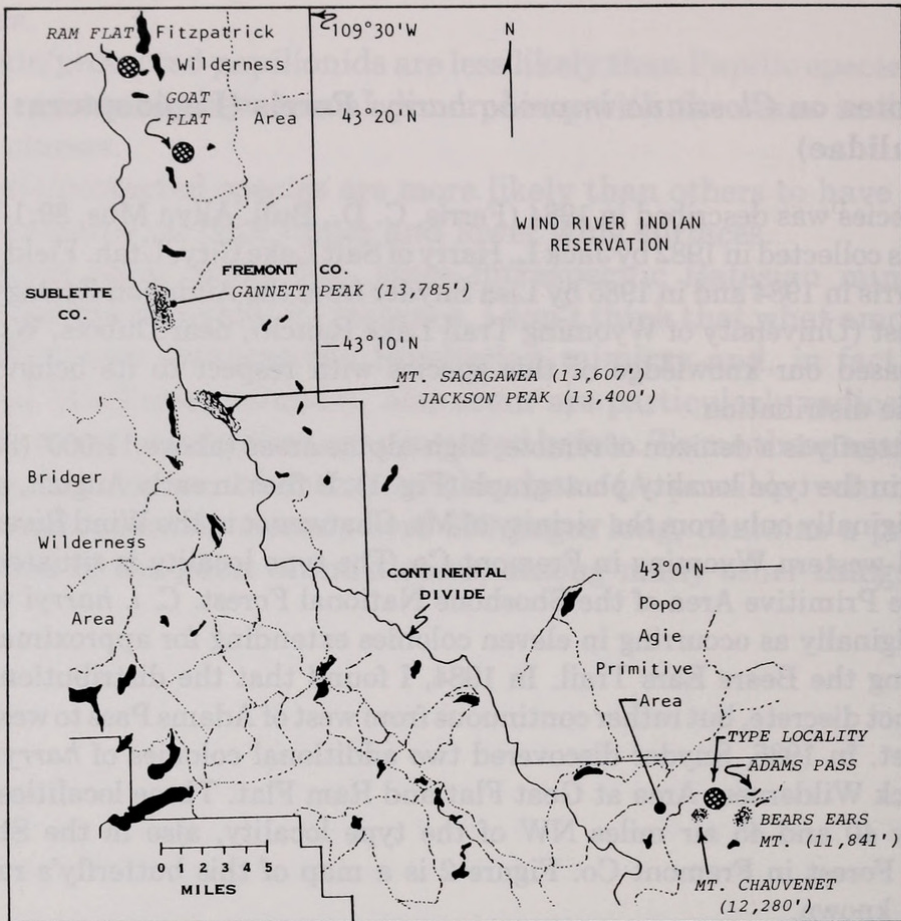


Fig. 2. Map showing the distribution (cross-hatched circles) of *C. improba harryi*. Only the larger lakes are shown. The dotted lines are hiking trails.

gravel on which mats of the larval hostplant (*Salix arctica* Pall) grow abundantly. This plant is widespread throughout alpine areas of Wyoming, but the butterfly is very local. Adults of *harryi* dorsally bask on gravel patches and on the pale granite boulders distributed over their habitat. From the rather dark aspect of museum specimens of this species, one would think that these butterflies would be very conspicuous against the pale background of the gravel and boulders. This is not the case, however, in the field. The pale central areas of the wings (dorsally) produce a cryptic pattern which blends very well with rocky substrates and renders the butterflies difficult to detect.

To date, this species has been found only on the east slope of the Wind River Range in Fremont Co., Wyoming. The eastern slope of the Range is considerably drier than the western slope which supports many butterfly fauna. It will be surprising if *harryi* is not eventually discovered in neighboring Sublette Co., at appropriate elevation, on the western slope of the Wind River Range. Access to suitable habitat areas, however, is only by foot or horseback over 20 miles or more of rugged terrain. This butterfly is abundant once a colony has been located, and is in no sense endangered, as may possibly be the case for its sibling species in Colorado *C. acrocnema* (Gall & Sperling).

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