

Eastern Pigmy Blue, *Brephidium isophthalma pseudofoea* (Morrison) (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae)¹

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Introduction

The eastern pigmy blue is our smallest eastern butterfly. It is found near saltwater—particularly in salt marshes where its host plants occur.

Distribution

The eastern pigmy blue is found in coastal areas from southern South Carolina to southern central Florida on the Atlantic coast, from the tip of peninsular Florida up the Gulf coast through the Big Bend Area, and from the western panhandle of Florida to eastern Louisiana.

Description

The wingspread is 3/4–5/8 inches (19–23 mm) (Opler and Malikul 1992). Undersides of wings are brown with a row of submarginal black spots with white highlights and are patterned with numerous white dashes and a submedian row of white circles. Upper sides of wings are brown with black spots without highlights.



Figure 1. Adult eastern pigmy blue, *Brephidium isophthalma pseudofoea* (Morrison).

Credits: Jerry F. Butler, UF/IFAS

Eastern pigmy blue eggs are pale blue-green. The larvae are green with small white tubercles that closely match the pattern on the glasswort host plant. Pupae are variable but usually yellow-brown with darker brown dots.

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Figure 2. Larva of the eastern pigmy blue, *Brephidium isophthalma pseudofoea* (Morrison).

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Figure 3. Annual glasswort, *Salicornia bigelovii* Torr. (Chenopodiaceae).

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Life Cycle

There are many flights all year in Florida. Males patrol near host plants, and courtship occurs in late afternoon. The primary larval host plant is annual glasswort, *Salicornia bigelovii* Torr. (Chenopodiaceae). Perennial glasswort, *Salicornia perennis* Mill. and saltwort, *Batis maritima* L.

(Bataceae) also may be used. In the Florida Keys, larvae are attended by ants (*Tapinoma sessile* [Say]) which stroke them and feed from the dorsal nectary gland on the seventh abdominal segment (Harvey & Longino 1989).

Selected References

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