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Maine is home to many rare wildlife species. Included is the locally known and State Endangered Clayton's copper butterfly. This small orange-brown butterfly with a wingspan of about one inch is subspecies of the more common and larger Dorcas copper. It is known from only 11 locations in Maine and two in neighboring New Brunswick. Six of the Maine locations are concentrated in a 10 square mile area around Lee, Winn, and Springfield. The largest population is found on MDIFW's Dwinal Flowage Wildlife Management Area located in Lee and Winn. A population also exists at the Madagodus Wildlife Management Area in nearby Webster Plt.



Clayton's copper is found only in association with its sole larval host plant, the shrubby cinquefoil. There are relatively few cinquefoil stands large enough to support viable Clayton's copper populations. This shade tolerant plant typically occurs along the edge of calcareous (limestone) wetlands, but also can be found in old fields.



Clayton's copper butterflies take one year to complete their life cycle. Eggs are laid in August on the underside of the cinquefoil leaves. The leaves and eggs drop to the ground in autumn, and the eggs over winter. The pale green larvae hatch in spring and crawl back up the plant to feed on its leaves. The larvae undergo five molts (instars) before turning into a pupa. Adult butterflies emerge during late July and August when the cinquefoil's yellow flowers are blooming. The butterfly continues to stay near stands of cinquefoil where the abundant yellow flowers provide a primary source of nectar.

Clayton's copper is listed as State Endangered because of the limited number, size, and distribution of its populations, the limited availability of its habitat, and its near-endemic status in Maine. Threats to the host plant also threaten the butterfly. Threats include flooding of wetlands whether by beaver or artificial impoundments,

and forest succession which can negatively impact both wetland and upland sites.

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