

## Frosted Elfin, *Callophrys irus*

**Status:**

*State:* Threatened

*Federal:* Not listed

### Identification

Slightly larger than most elfins of similar morphological appearance, adult frosted elfins obtain sizes in the range of 1 in.-1.25 in. (26-32 mm) and both sexes of this species look alike. The upper surface of the wings are a drab brown color and provide naturalists with little help in distinguishing this species from other closely related elfins. A small



“tail” extending from the hindwings is one diagnostic feature that can be used to differentiate this species from

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others. The under side of the hindwing also contains distinctive markings that can be helpful in positively identifying frosted elfins. For example, the posterior margin of the hindwing often has a white “frosting,” which is the characteristic from which this species has derived its name. A black spot near the “tail” on the hindwing is almost always present and is an important field mark for proper identification. Another characteristic feature of the under side of the hindwing is a very crooked white line that runs roughly parallel to the body and divides the wing in half.

### Habitat

Dry clearings and open areas that are natural (e.g. savannas) or of human origin (e.g. power-line right of ways and roadsides). The presence of food plants (see Diet) is also of importance.

### Status and Conservation

The frosted elfin is often locally rare and occurs in small isolated populations. It is believed to be extirpated from portions of its historic range, including Maine, Ontario, and possibly Texas. It currently is not listed for federal protection, but its rarity throughout its range might justify a federal status of threatened or endangered in the near future.