

Hesperiidae family

Black and White Sedge-skipper

*Antipoda atralba***Also known as:** Diamond Sand-skipper**Abundance in Adelaide area:** Rare**Flight:** Double brooded: October–November and March–April**Wingspan:** m 31 mm; f 35 mm**Mature larva length:** 25–30 mm

If you have a coastal garden and live anywhere between the Marino Conservation Park and the southern beaches, growing the Black Grass Saw-sedge may help to re-establish this rare Skipper. It is important to protect the remaining areas where the Skipper occurs from further degradation. There are two flight periods—in spring and autumn.

Caterpillar food plants: Saw-sedges. The caterpillars eat the leaves.

Adelaide native species: Black Grass Saw-sedge (*Gahnia lanigera*), Curled Saw-sedge (*Gahnia ancistrophylla*), Limestone Saw-sedge (*Gahnia deusta*).

This Skipper is mainly an inhabitant of coastal heaths where its caterpillar food plant continues to grow.

It is known to have two emergence periods, one in late spring and another in autumn, with each brood taking a year to go through their life cycle. In some areas there is only a spring brood, with no sign of the butterfly in autumn. It tends to be restricted to small parts of any given area, even if its food plants are more widely distributed.

The butterfly is a deep brown on its upper side, suffused with yellowish or olive coloured scales near the body. Both wings have a distinctly chequered scale-fringe of pale grey to white and dark brown.



The underside of the butterfly is generally pale to mid grey, with a yellowish area near the top of the forewing. The male is distinguished from the female by a linear black marking of specialised sex scales in the middle of the upper forewing. The female also has more rounded outer wing margins.

The caterpillars make tubular silk-lined shelters on their *Gahnia* Saw-sedge food plants. They retire into these shelters during the day, emerging at night to feed. The mature caterpillars are generally green in colour, with brownish and whitish lines running the length of the body. The head is pale brown or greenish-brown, with a dark brown central wedge-shaped marking and marks on the side of the head.

