

Pieridae family

Wood White

*Delias aganippe***Also known as:**

Spotted Jezebel or Red-spotted Jezebel

Abundance in Adelaide area: Rare**Flight:** Sep–May**Wingspan:** m 61 mm; f 63 mm**Mature larva length:** 40 mm

This superb migratory species has become less common in South Australia in recent years, but its mistletoe food plants are still prevalent close to Adelaide. It is rarely sighted in the metropolitan area. It favours healthy Quandong bushes for breeding and may be lured into the suburbs if these are grown. Gardeners in the Hills and in areas to the south and north of Adelaide may also find it worthwhile to try growing a Quandong, as they may well rear a brood of these magnificent, colourful butterflies. In the meantime you can enjoy the native Quandong fruit!

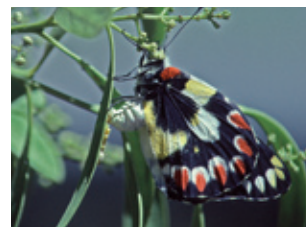
Caterpillar food plants: Mistletoes (*Amyema* spp.), and root-parasitic plants. The caterpillars eat the flowers and soft green parts of the plant.

Adelaide native species: Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) on *Eucalyptus* spp., Drooping Mistletoe (*Amyema pendula* ssp. *pendula*) on Stringybark Eucalyptus and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Sweet Quandong (*Santalum acuminatum*), Melaleuca Mistletoe (*Amyema melaleucae*) on *Melaleuca lanceolata* and sometimes *Melaleuca halmaturorum*, Wire-leaf Mistletoe (*Amyema preissii*) on *Acacia* species, and, very rarely, Native Cherry (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*).

Other South Australian species: Grey Mistletoe (*Amyema quandang* var. *quandang*) on Western Myall (*Acacia papyrocarpa*).



While superficially similar to some other species of White butterfly on its upper side, there is no mistaking this species with its bold red, yellow, black and white patterned underside. It belongs to a large group of similar butterflies that are found throughout eastern and northern Australia and reach an enormous diversity in New Guinea.



All *Delias* feed upon parasitic plants. The Wood White is the only member of the group found in South Australia and it appears to have adapted to hot, dry conditions much better than any of its relatives. It is generally quite rare in the Adelaide and hills region, though it can be locally common in other areas of the state in some years.



The butterfly has a background colour of white to mid-grey on the upper surface of both wings. Sometimes the grey is a quite deep blue-grey.

