



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

NEWSLETTER

No. 17: July 2004

NEW WEBSITE FOR BCSA

Committee member Trevor Rowe has been working very diligently over the last few months not only putting together our new website and in the process also learning how to do it. The site is now on the web. The address is www.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/index.htm. Our thanks to Trevor for all his work.

We have not attempted to provide information on butterfly life histories as this information is well covered by Roger Grund's personal website 'Butterflies of South Australia' and links to all aspects of butterfly life histories, conservation, host plants, butterfly gardening etc. are linked directly to Roger's site. We hope the combination will work well. Your feed back will be appreciated.

Please check out Trevor's work and send comments, photos and articles for the website and for the newsletter to the website email Address hesperilla@hotmail.com.au.

OUR FIRST TWO FACT SHEETS PRINTED

Attendance at the South Australian Australian Plant Society show in May prompted a flurry of activity amongst several committee members to complete and print our first two fact sheets and thanks go to David Keane (plants), Roger Grund (butterflies) and Jan Forrest (design) for their efforts.

All committee members have been working on a number of fact sheets depicting life histories of South Australian butterflies however these first two are of a more general nature.

Fact Sheet 1. *Butterflies—an Introduction* provides an overview of butterfly families, the structure of butterflies and the difference between a butterfly and a moth.

Fact Sheet 2. *Attracting Butterflies to your garden* is geared to the urban garden in South Australia and provides lists of nectar plants suitable for adult butterflies as well as a food plant list for caterpillars of urban gardens.

Copies of these sheets will be included free to members with this news letter, however as BCSA funded the printing of this first set of sheets the cost for further copies will be \$1.00 each. It is hoped that when other fact sheets being developed are completed, that sponsorship can be found to ensure this information is more freely available to the Community possibly in a booklet or flyer sets.

Inside this issue:

- New website for BCSA
- Our first two fact sheets published.
- Annual General Meeting
- Australian Plants Society Autumn plant sale
- Member profile— Maria Johns
- A new Adelaide arrival: Orange Palm Dart
- Tailed emperor larvae on new host plant record for South Australia
- Membership fees now due
- Field day and social event 19th September.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members and friends are invited to the
**Annual General Meeting of
 Butterfly Conservation SA Inc.**
 to be held at
**Urrbrae Wetlands Centre,
 Cross Roads UUBRAE**
 on
Monday 9th August at 7.30 pm

Business will include:

- Receipt an acceptance of annual reports
- The election of office bearers for 2004-05

Following formal business

GUEST SPEAKER:

**Maria Johns will speak on: "Plants of the
 Monte Verde Cloud Forest in Costa Rica"**

**A fascinating look at this biodiversity wonder
 of the world, including butterflies observed.**

At the conclusion supper will be served.

**Please come and support your committee, we
 are especially keen to have new members serve
 on the committee.**

2004 AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY AUTUMN PLANT SALE

The 2003 autumn plant sale was held at the Wayville Showgrounds on 1st and 2nd May and BCSA had a very successful promotion stall. At this weekend our two new flyers were available to visitors and members were kept busy on both days answering questions.



Thanks go to members who assisted: David Keane, Lois Hasenohr, Maria Johns, Roger Grund, Jill Davy-Warren, Trevor Rowe, Janet Subagio and Tim Gudgeon. Jan Forrest set up the display on the Friday.

MEMBER PROFILE— MARIA JOHNS

As a new member of the butterfly group I would like to introduce myself. My name is Maria Johns I was born in Nova Scotia, Canada.

My first memories of butterflies were chasing them through the summer pasture when I was 8 years old and making a butterfly net so I could capture them and get a closer look.

When I arrived in Adelaide 20 years ago I was amazed by the diversity of native plants and how they looked very different from the local plants where I grew up. My interest evolved from gardening to native Australian plants, which lead to interest in the local bush. On Sunday mornings I work as a bushcare volunteer in the bush pulling out the environmental weeds that threaten to smother the local plants which the native birds and butterflies depend. The curiosity in nature and the interactions has lead me to do a Degree in Ecology at Flinders University.

For the past 6 years I have been working for the Department for the Environment on private land conservation. There are many interactions between the native plant and the native butterflies and I hope by joining the group I am able to learn more and also assist the group.

Cheers

Maria

Maria will be our Guest Speaker at the Annual General Meeting 9th August, her talk "Plants of the Monte Verde Cloud Forest in Costa Rica" will provide a fascinating insight into this biodiversity wonder of the world.

Here is a summary: In Monteverde Costa Rica high up in the mountains of the continental divide is a cloud forest. This biodiversity hot spot has more than 100 species of mammals, over 400 species of birds including 30 kinds of hummingbirds, butterflies and over 5000 species of moths and 2,500 species of plants. The area is acclaimed as one of the most outstanding wildlife refuges in the New World Tropics. Come see an assortment of photos from a recent holiday spent in this majestic area.



A NEW ARRIVAL TO ADELAIDE:

Cephrenes augiades sperthias (Felder) (Orange Palm-dart)

This skipper normally occurs in the hot tropical and subtropical coastal rainforests and moist woodlands of Queensland and NSW, but in recent years has extended its range to the major southern cities of Australia, and also westward to Darwin and some tropical coastal areas of WA, being accidentally introduced to those areas as larvae and pupae on ornamental palms being propagated by nurseries in Qld and northern NSW. The skipper was first reported from Perth in 1977, and in Adelaide and Melbourne in 1990. The skipper, along with most others in the group, has a characteristic wing pose when settled in full sun, with the forewings being held partially open while the hindwings are held horizontal.

The skippers usually fly near palm trees, with the males sometimes setting up territories on the palms, or higher still in adjacent trees, or sometimes even on nearby low bushes, where they will wait with the characteristic open wing pose, but periodically will fly off to either check out other nearby palms looking for new females with which to mate, or to chase off other males. Males have a very fast flight, and even though they are large, they are soon lost to sight. Females tend to have a slower flight especially when in an egg laying mode, and will periodically land on a palm to lay eggs or sun themselves. They will cover large areas looking for suitable palms to lay eggs. The skipper is easily approached with care when settled.

Larval food-host: Most species of palms (Palmae/Arecaceae), but the adult female prefers to lay eggs on the palms with broad-leaf pinnae like *Archontophoenix* spp (bungalow palm), *Livistona* spp (cabbage tree palms), and *Phoenix* spp (date palms). The larvae eat the leaves of the foodplant.



Flight period in SA.:

This skipper is rarely seen in flight in Adelaide so flight records are few, however these records indicate it to be most active during the warmer months, from September to May.

Distribution: In South Australia the skipper has only been found in suburban Adelaide, in warm sheltered areas on the plains. The main population is presently centred within the Adelaide Botanical Gardens where during the early years of its introduction the skipper became well established in the newly constructed Tropical Rainforest Conservatory.

Habitat: The skipper is found where palms grow in high density. It requires warm sheltered conditions for survival, and prefers a moist microclimate within other tall vegetation.

Conservation Status in S.A.: It is presently rarely seen, and is likely to stay that way, as suitable habitat is very limited. It is essentially a localized urban skipper in Adelaide.

Threats: The larvae have the potential to tatter palm leaves and gardeners are therefore likely to treat the skipper as a pest, although the damage would be minimal as skipper numbers are very low (except in the Tropical Conservatory) due to the unfavourable climate in Adelaide.

Conservation Strategy: None required.

Text and photo from website 'Butterflies of South Australia' author R.Grund for full information see: <http://www.chariot.net.au/~rgrund/index.htm>

TAILED EMPEROR LARVAE ON NEW FOODPLANT RECORD FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Committee Member Jill Davy-Warren was for the first time, fortunate during mid-autumn to have a female Tailed Emperor lay eggs on a large, old Illawarra Flame Tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) growing in her back yard.

This food host incidentally, is a new food host record for South Australia. Some eggs were laid on the leaves of the lower outer parts of the tree. She collected a couple of eggs to follow the early-stage life history of the butterfly. At the time of this newsletter the larvae are about half grown.

During one wet evening the netting covered bowl of foodplant and caterpillars were left outside. Next morning the bowl was full of water and the caterpillars submerged. With her heart in her mouth, she quickly emptied the water and fortunately the caterpillars regained consciousness and are once again happy in their bowl.

See (http://www.chariot.net.au/~erg/sempronius_ds.htm) for more information and photographs on this butterfly.



Tailed Emperor *Polyura sempronius* larvae
Photo: RHFisher

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE

Please complete the enclosed form and return with your annual fee of \$10 to
**Treasurer 13/4 Randolph Avenue,
PARKSIDE. 5063**

FIELD DAY and SOCIAL EVENT, 19th September, 2004

Members and friends are invited to visit several interesting patches of scrub to the south of the city. In particular, Manning Reserve, Hardy's Scrub now part of the Onkaparinga Reserve and the Guides South Australia Heritage agreement property 'Douglas Scrub' near McLaren Flat.

At these sites we hope to locate a number of butterfly species and at Douglas Scrub, plant and bird lists and information on revegetation projects will be available.

Bring own barbecue meat and a salad to share. A small donation to cover barbecue facilities at Douglas Scrub will be incurred.

Further details including times and directions will be included in our next newsletter or contact Jan Forrest, see below for contact details.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

Chairman: Roger Grund

Secretary and Newsletter Editor: Jan Forrest OAM C/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, ADELAIDE, 5000 ph (08) 82077503.

email <forrest.jan@saugov.sa.gov.au >

Treasurer : Lois Hasenohr , 13/4 Randolph Avenue, PARKSIDE. 5063

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The full exhibition and AO size panels from the Exhibition "Where have all the Butterflies gone?" are available from Jan Forrest at the South Australian Museum for use by Landcare and other Conservation groups at seminars, conferences and workshops or just for display. Included are five introductory panels, and seventeen panels from seven habitat areas: Coastal, Grasses, Mallee, Urban, Migration/Vagrant, Eucalyptus Forrest/Woodland, Arid, Wetland and Lower South East.

MEETINGS

Committee meetings are held monthly (usually the second Monday of the month) at 6.00pm in the Urrbrae Wetlands Resource Centre, Cross Roads, Urrbrae. All members are welcome to attend. If you would like further information or receive an agenda please contact the Secretary Jan Forrest at the address above.

WEB SITES

BCSA: <http://www.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/index.htm>

South Australian Butterflies: <http://www.chariot.net.au/~rgrund/index.htm>
(produced by Chairman, Roger Grund)

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

RACHAEL OSBORNE
ANNA DE SANCTIS
HELEN VONOW

