



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

NEWSLETTER

No. 21: August, 2005.

SURVEY OF THE DALHOUSIE SPRINGS AREA

BCSA Chairman Roger Grund made a trip to the Dalhousie Springs area in the Far North Region of South Australia during the period 21-28 September 2004, to survey for butterflies in an area that has not received historical attention from lepidopterists.

The weather was good with temperatures in the 30's to high 20's degrees centigrade. It was intended to be a much longer and broader survey but was curtailed by a medical emergency. The area had received some good early-winter rains and so it was thought there would be a good chance of a floral blooming and along with it a good flight of butterflies, even though the rainfall

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Fig 1



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6 and 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10

Fig 2

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc. for membership enquiries and annual membership payments (\$10):
Treasurer, 13/4 Randolph Avenue, PARKSIDE. 5063

was poor during July and August. In fact, it was found the area was already in the mid stages of drying out by the time the survey was undertaken and the local butterfly fauna was very active and often very ragged. The country is mainly gibber plain (Fig. 1) and breakaway but some nice vegetated red dune habitat is present just to the south of Hamilton and again to the northeast of Mt Dare near the Finke River.

It was a chance to test out a new Subaru Forester, but by the time I had reached Coober Pedy along the Stuart Highway the car had already received half a dozen windscreen cracks from stones flung up by trucks, particularly south of Roxby Downs where the trucks are far too wide for the highway. There were no butterflies of interest south of Coober Pedy but at the first creek crossing immediately east of Coober Pedy along the road to Oodnadatta was a good floral display that included *Cullen*(*Psoralea*) and *Indigofera/Swainsona*. Only small, common blue butterflies were present, but abundant. At the major creek crossings of the Lora, Arckaringa and Neales, the low vegetation had all been mowed back by cattle. However, there was a channel immediately to the west of Oodnadatta that had good grass and flowering vegetation, but unfortunately no interesting butterflies.

Heading north from Oodnadatta, the crossing at the Alberga River had very nice, ungrazed vegetation that included windmill grass (*Enteropogon*), the host plant for the endemic Inland Grass Skipper (*Croitana arenaria*) (Fig. 2), and several of these pretty skippers were seen flying which is the most southeasterly recording for this skipper to date. The red dunes south of Hamilton had a very diverse floral community and many species of common butterflies were seen flying. Wayne Williams, owner of Hamilton Station, directed me west along the Hamilton Creek (Fig. 3) to Carpamoongana Waterhole (Fig. 4) and its environs, which he had kept free of grazing stock. Although the waterhole was nearly dry, there was a flourishing colony of the small Dark Grass-blue (*Zizeeria karsandra*) (Figs 6, 7 males) and its prostrate hostplants Hairy Carpet-weed (*Glinus lotoides*) (Fig. 5) and Slender Carpet-weed (*Glinus oppositifolius*) (Fig. 5). This was the first time this butterfly has been seen in the far north of the state (the only other place it had been seen in S.A. was at Renmark back in 1962 where it is now probably extinct). Also seen flying was a further specimen of the Inland Grass-skipper.

From this locality I started into the Dalhousie area (Witjira National Park) along the Pedirka Track, and the roads immediately deteriorated into abominable, tyre-shredding gibber tracks. The lower Hamilton and Stevenson Creeks were cattle grazed, but further east and throughout the park there are smaller *Acacia* lined creeks with good floral vegetation in which common butterfly types were plentiful. The main reason for the visit into Dalhousie was to look at the permanent vegetation associated with the artesian, freshwater thermal-springs, and to this end the springs at Dalhousie Ruin and a further dozen or so were examined between the ruins and the main camp site. The best and most diverse vegetation was seen near the main-campsite springs (Figs 8, 9) and to the south (Fig. 10) wherever the highest flows of artesian water occurred. At the former site are particularly large areas of kunai or blady grass (*Imperata cylindrica*). Mature date palms introduced to the springs during the early stages of the Dalhousie farming experiment were on the list for examination to determine if the large Yellow Palm-dart skipper (*Cephrènes trichopepla*) had made it south to the area from Palm Valley near Alice Springs. However, none were seen. Satyr browns and small grass skippers that use grasses as hostplants were another survey target, but they too were not seen, and it is not known if they were ever present or whether they were exterminated by overgrazing stock animals introduced by the pastoralists.

After Dalhousie the extensive Eringa Waterhole on the Lindsay Creek was examined but cattle occupied it with the resultant usual trampling and overgrazing damage to the low vegetation. From there I headed for Mt Dare, and within the park there were several creek lines with good vegetation. At Mt Dare Homestead there was good herby vegetation and a large dam that at the time was half full of water. The latter was a good place to see all the local birds including the rare pigeons and red-tailed black cockatoos, and it also had a good population of butterflies that either used the damp water edge for 'puddling' to acquire their water and dissolved mineral requirements or utilised the local herby vegetation as hostplants. The Dark Grass-blue was a common puddler and for the first time the Common Grass-blue (*Zizina labradus*) was seen to use an acacia as a hostplant, which was native Mimosa (*Acacia farnesiana*).

I then headed out along the Andado Track to the Finke River. It was red dune territory with very interesting vegetation and flowers were everywhere, but unfortunately the butterflies were still the common types. However, one of the reasons for the visit to the Finke was to look for the Maloga Bean (*Vigna lanceolata*), which is known to be a hostplant for the rare Black-spot Grass-blue (*Famegana alsulus*) that had only recently been recorded from South Australia along the Alberga River further to the west. The plant was common in the area but unfortunately the latter butterfly was not utilising the plant, being replaced by the Common Grass-blue, which was very happy to use the bean as a newly recorded hostplant. The large tree-grevillea was also common near the Finke and being in flower was covered in the spectacular blue butterfly Amaryllis Azure (*Ogyris amaryllis*) feeding from the flowers. A large colony of dingoes was also present in the area and long vocal choruses were well received in the evening and mornings.

Except for the Dark Grass-blue, only common types of butterflies were seen in Witjira NP and the area was a disappointment as the unique habitat should have been ideal for a number of rare endemic Central Australian butterflies. Large migrant butterflies such as the White Migrant (*Catopsilia pyranthe*) and the Common Eggfly (*Hypolimnys bolina*) from northern tropical areas were not seen, although hostplants for the latter were common near waterholes in the park. It would seem these butterflies fly into the area later in the monsoon season.

I left Witjira NP and headed into the Northern Territory and decided to camp at Charlotte Waters on a gibber plain in the open so as to be away from the menace of cattle and dingoes. Unfortunately the winds picked up during the night and nearly blew the tent away with me inside. Not that I noticed as I had a sudden kidney-stone attack and had to unpeg the tent and race back to Adelaide to assess the problem, but in doing so just missed out on a following local thunderstorm with heavy rain and cricket-ball size hail. Call that providence? Interestingly, I do not recall seeing one kangaroo in the area as I drove south during the night, and it would seem the dingoes do a good job in culling their numbers!, and perhaps many other small animals.

Recorded butterflies in the Dalhousie area were: **Swallowtails**; Chequered Swallowtail (*Papilio demoleus*): **Whites and Yellows**; Caper White (*Belenois java*), Small Grass-yellow (*Eurema smilax*): **Brushfoots**; Lesser Wanderer (*Danaus chrysippus*), Meadow Argus (*Junonia villida*), Australian Painted Lady (*Vanessa kershawi*): **Blues**; Long-tailed Pea-blue (*Lampides boeticus*), Amaryllis Azure, Two-spotted Line-blue (*Nacaduba biocellata*), Wattle Blue (*Theclinesstes miskini*), Salt-bush Blue (*Theclinesstes serpentata*), Dark Grass-blue, Common Grass-blue: **Skippers**; Inland Grass-skipper.

For more information on the butterflies check the website 'South Australian Butterflies' <http://www.chariot.net.au/~rgrund/index.htm>

Roger Grund

EXCURSIONS

Karen Lane, indigenous plant grower from 'Growning Bush' will give a guided walk along **WINDSOR STREET PARKSIDE/UNLEY** on **Saturday 17th September from 2—3pm**. Meet corner of Windsor and Marion Street Parkside at 2.00pm. This outstanding example of indigenous plantings contain examples suitable to grow in gardens on the Adelaide plains and Karen will show you the plants known to be host to several species of butterfly larvae as well as a number of examples of nectar plants used by adult butterflies. The group will then proceed to the **URRBRAE WETLANDS** where Karen will provide further information on the plants growing in this haven.

Eastern part of **BELAIR NATIONAL PARK** (two sites) to look for the Phigalia skipper on **Sunday 30th October, 2005 11—3** bring cut lunch. Meet at 11.00am at Sheoak Road at, northeast corner of Belair NP at the gate at the continuation of Saddle Hill Road that occurs within the park. Check out BCSA the website for map (remember daylight saving on the 29th—move clocks forward one hour).

MINNAWARRA near Myponga to assist with a butterfly survey. **Date to be advised** but probably in late January 2006. 4WD vehicles would be useful. Expressions of interest to Jan Forrest. Details will be on the website and in the next newsletter.

**Spring-Summer-Autumn 2004-2005;
Field and other notes by D.A (Andy) Young,
R.S.D 330 Newlands Service, via Kingscote, 5223:**

Mt Bryan /Riverland:

An interesting field trip was undertaken in the area of Mt Bryan and from there through to Morgan and Wakerie in the Riverland, on the 30th and 31st of October 2004. David Moore accompanied me. Dave is the son of well-known lepidopterist Mike Moore. The Mt Bryan trip was undertaken on the 30th of October. Its aim was to locate colonies of the Yellow Ochre skipper, *Trapezites lutea*. Following on from an invitation from a local landowner, Dave and myself undertook an ascent of a peak in the western Mt Bryan Range. This area was characterised by being heavily grazed, with a minimum of trees and smaller foodplant species, except *Oxalis corniculata*. The hilltop proved to be of interest though, with a species list including; the Small Grass-yellow, *Eurema smilax* (several); Spotted Jezebel, *Delias aganippe* (2 male specimens); the Caper White, *Belenois java teutonia* (1 specimen); the Australian Painted Lady, *Vanessa kershawi* (common); the Lesser Wanderer, *Danaus chrysippus* (several); the Chequered Copper, *Lucia limbaria* (2 specimens); the Salt-bush Blue, *Theclinesthes s. serpentata* (1 specimen); the Pea-blue, *Lampides boeticus* (several) and the Common Grass-blue, *Zizina l. labradus* (common). This was quite a species list considering that the conditions at the time were windy, with long overcast periods!

We then proceeded east to a large area of open grassland that has been declared a National Park, but had not been named at the time of the visit. We found that butterfly numbers were low in the area, with only a few Australian Painted Lady, *Vanessa kershawi*, a couple of Salt-bush Blues, *Theclinesthes s. serpentata* and numerous Common Grass-blues, *Zizina l. labradus*. A single male Amaryllis Azure, *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis*, was noted at a hilltop within the park, but the species were found to be quite common in the general area where ever mistletoes were noted. On searching clumps of *Lomandra multiflora* growing in small gullies in the park, David was soon finding numerous Yellow Ochre eggs. Having observed the plants he was finding them on, I was soon finding them also. Over about 30 minutes in 3 sites, I estimate we found roughly 15 eggs and 2 freshly hatched larvae. The later were sheltering in the junction of leaves at the base of the Lomandras. I also located a small, unoccupied shelter on one of these plants. We noted a female Yellow Ochre flying down one of these small gullies and searching for foodplants.

On the 31st of October, we searched various Riverland sites for *Ogyris* species in colony areas discovered by Mike Moore and which Dave had observed over many years. We camped for the night near Morgan and I was up early the next day, observing Two-spotted Line-blues, *Nacaduba biocellata*, flying at 7.30 in the morning, which was already quite warm. As we progressed through the day, we noted the Amaryllis Azure, *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis*, flying in numbers wherever appropriate foodplant was found. The Silky Azure, *Ogyris oroetes apiculata* and Southern Purple Azure, *Ogyris genoveva f. splendida*, were noted at old colony sites, the Southern Purple Azure as a pupa in the entrance to a nest of the ant *Camponotus nigriceps*. A highlight for me was catching and releasing a female specimen of the Arid Bronze-azure, *Ogyris s. subterrestris*, the only one noted during our visit to this site. All in all it was a great trip, and I am grateful to both Dave Moore for accompanying me and guiding me during our Riverland trip, and to Mike and Marion Moore for lending us their family van for this trip.

Ngarkat Field Trip:

In late November (27th and 28th '04) a field trip was undertaken to the Ngarkat National Park, to see if the Large Bronze Azure, *Ogyris idmo*, could be relocated. This trip was undertaken with Dr. Daniel Thomas who has previously been shown the species in this location by Mr. Lindsay Hunt. No examples of this species were definitely observed, though the large numbers of the Australian Painted Lady, *Vanessa kershawi*, provided much distraction. Species noted during field studies were: the Caper White, *Belenois java teutonia* (common); Australian Painted-lady, *Vanessa kershawi* (very common); Common Brown, *Heteronympha merope* (occasional males); Klug's Xenica, *Geitoneura klugii* (common in wooded areas); the Common Grass-blue, *Zizina l. labradus* (moderately common); the Fringed Heath-blue, *Neolucia a. agricola* (2-3 specimens); the Botched Dusky-blue, *Candalides acaosta* (common along ridgelines) and the Western Dusky-blue, *Candalides hyacinthina simplex* (1 specimen on a ridgeline). Ten eggs and two first instar larvae of the Large Brown Skipper, *Motasingha t. trimaculata*, were located on *Lepidosperma carphoides* during the trip. The Common Sun-moth, *Synemon parthenoides*, were



Zizina labradus photo A.Young

common in open sections of the Park and a second species of *Synemon* was noted, which further field work will be undertaken to identify later this year. I would like to thank Dan for accompanying me on this expedition and for putting up with my rather energetic efforts during his weekend off.

Gladstone/ Mt Remarkable:

A trip was undertaken to the Gladstone area for a friend’s birthday celebrations in very late November and early December 2004 and some fieldwork was undertaken during this time. During a prior trip in April 2004, several examples of the White-banded Grass-dart, *Taractrocer a p. papyria*, were seen and a note was made to follow up on this observation, as it represented an easterly range extension to Roger Grund’s Pt. Augusta observations. During the December trip, 2 larvae were located on Rice Millet, *Piptatherum miliaceum*, growing on the banks of a small creekline that runs through the town. Apart from the range extension, this foodplant seems to have been previously unrecorded which added extra interest to this observation. *Piptatherum miliaceum* was the only grass species carrying green growth in this semi-arid location and may provide further records of the White-banded Grass-dart in unusual locations, so members should keep an eye out for it in their travels. The larvae encountered were gathered and raised through by Mr. L. Hunt, who confirmed the species identification. Species noted at Gladstone in December included: the Australian Painted Lady, *Vanessa kershawi* (common); the Meadow Argus, *Junonia villida* (common); the Small White, *Pieris rapae* (common); the Common Grass-blue, *Zizina l. labradus* (common); the Caper White, *Belenois java teutonia* (moderately common); the Lesser Wanderer, *Danaus chrysippus* (moderately common); the Small Grass-yellow, *Eurema smilax* (moderately common in creekline); the Pea Blue, *Lampides boeticus* (several noted in a very local area); the Wattle Blue, *Theclinessthes m. miskini* (1 observation) and the Salt-bush Blue, *Theclinessthes s. serpentata* (moderately common). A trip was made to Terowie, approximately 50km east. Several specimens of the Amethyst Hairstreak, *Jalmenus icilius*, were noted flying over and adjacent to *Acacia victoriae* approximately 1km south of the Terowie Township. The other species noted at this location was the Two-spotted Line-blue, *Nacaduba biocellata* and, apart from a few Australian Painted Ladies, *Vanessa kershawi*, very few butterflies were noted in the area.

On the 6th of December 2004 a trip was made to the Spring Creek area of Mt Remarkable, to check on a *Jalmenus* colony noted in the early 1980’s. On arrival at mid-morning, hundreds of butterflies could be noted flying over *Acacia victoriae* trees adjacent to the entrance track. On stopping to examine these butterflies, they were quickly established to be *Jalmenus icilius* and within 3-4 minutes numerous larvae and pupae were located on the trees that were swarming with small, black ants (*Iridomyrmex* sp.). One of the pupae that I had collected emerged on my palm. The butterfly dried its wings in the dry, mid-north atmosphere. When its wings were dried, it flew off as I watched enraptured. On further checking, it was established that the colony was quite widespread, extending to the Wilmington water supply on the western side of Mt Remarkable. Adults were noted feeding on Eucalypt blossom at the crest of the ridgeline where the entrance crossed it.

Andy Young



Jalmenus icilius Photos Lindsay Hunt



Nacaduba biocellata photos Lindsay Hunt



BUTTERFLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Offers of help are requested from someone with **layout and publishing experience** to assist us with compiling and setting up the proposed booklet on 'butterfly gardening'. If you can help please contact the Jan Forrest c/- SA Museum or at forrest.jan@saugov.sa.gov.au.

Stage two of the butterfly campaign is now being planned. We hope to contact indigenous plant growers, Environmental Officers in local councils, Landcare, Coast care and Friends Groups to promote the propagation of host and nectar plants and the planting of local species of these plants.

Jill Davy-Warren 83736772 will be convening this part of the project and would welcome assistance from members who have an interest in growing or propagating plants and in promoting our butterfly campaign to any of these groups.

It is hoped that examples of local species of butterfly host and nectar plants can be grown during 2006 in local reserves etc. so that when we commence promoting butterfly gardening to the general public they can view areas of native vegetation which include these plants, as well as be able to talk to knowledgeable people who have first hand experience on the types of plants suitable for gardens and local soils.

GRANT SUCCESS

Thanks to the Federal Government 'Grants to Voluntary Environmental and Heritage Organisations' we are now the proud owners of a data projector. This new projector will make it so much easier for us to provide guest speakers to groups, particularly once the butterfly gardening campaign is in full swing. Several members have offered to be guest speakers. If you would like to join the ranks of the guest speakers or if you know of a group who would like a presentation from BCSA please contact the secretary Jan Forrest.

EMAIL addresses

Not everyone with an email address wishes to receive the Newsletter via a PDF however from time to time the Secretary contacts all those on email to provide information on excursions or special meetings. If you are on email and you did not receive a notice about the AGM then your email details are not recorded on the database. If you wish to receive special information please advise the secretary of your email address at: forrest.jan@saugov.sa.gov.au.

GUIDED WALK—Windsor Street Parkside/Unley 17th September 2—3 see page 3 for details.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

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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.

DIARY DATES**MEETINGS -**

Committee meetings are held **bi-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 Secretary Jan Forrest or Chairman Roger Grund
Windsor Street UNLEY Guided walk—Saturday 17th September 2 –3
Belair National Park—Sunday 30th October 11—3
Minnawarra near Myponga—sometime in late January 2006

WEB SITES

'Butterfly Conservation SA Inc.' <http://www.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/index.htm>
'South Australian Butterflies' <http://www.chariot.net.au/~rgrund/index.htm>

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:
Karen Ashford
Marion Primary School
Pam DiLorenzo
Kay Muggleton
Linda Creed
Kerry Thomas
Ronald Bellchambers
Judith Eley
Lane family
Margaret Reinhardt

