



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

NEWSLETTER

No. 23: May, 2006.

BUTTERFLY TRIP TO INNAMINCKA

Roger Grund

Following on the Dalhousie butterfly survey (Newsletter No. 21), BCSA Chairman Roger Grund made a trip to the Far Northeast Region of South Australia in the vicinity of Innamincka to (among other things) assess the butterfly population. This was undertaken during the period 23-30 April 2005. Unfortunately, this region had not received any significant monsoon rain since November 2004, but it was decided to assess the region based on the presence of permanent waterholes along the Cooper River system. The weather was good with temperatures in the 30's to high 20's degrees centigrade. Road conditions were generally good except for the gibber portions near Lake Blanche and again north of Innamincka.

The trip north from Adelaide to Lyndhurst was undertaken without major incident. Past Lyndhurst the river vegetation in the road crossings to Montecollina Bore was generally poor, with most herby and grass vegetation either dried off or eaten back by stock. No evidence for the Inland Grass Skipper (*Croitana arenaria*) was seen. The creek overflow between Lakes Blanche and Callabonna, and again at Yaningurie Waterhole (Fig. 1) on the Strzelecki Creek were examined for vegetation, and found to be mainly samphire and common sedge, but no evidence for sedge skippers was seen; (the Dingy Four-spot Sedge-skipper *Motasingha trimaculata* has been reported from here). North to Innamincka there were the odd claypan community of *Acacia*, particularly the bramble wattle (*A. victoriae*) and sandhill wattle (*A. ligulata*), and also local native milkweeds (Fig. 2, host plants for the Lesser Wanderer *Danaus chrysippus*). The former wattle is the hostplant for the two hairstreak blues *Jalmenus lithochroa* and *J. icilius*, but evidence for these butterflies was never seen during the trip. Interestingly, large mounds (Fig. 3) of *A. ligulata* seed were often seen accumulated on black meat-ant nests, deposited after the funicle had been removed from seed taken back to the nest by the worker ants.

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Fig 1. Yaningurie Waterhole



Fig 2. Native milkweed, Native Pear
Marsdenia australis



Fig 3. Meat ant mound with (dark)
Acacia ligulata seed



Fig 4. Cullyamurra Waterhole



Figs 5,6. Lakeside vegetation, Coongie Lake
Stemodia florulenta



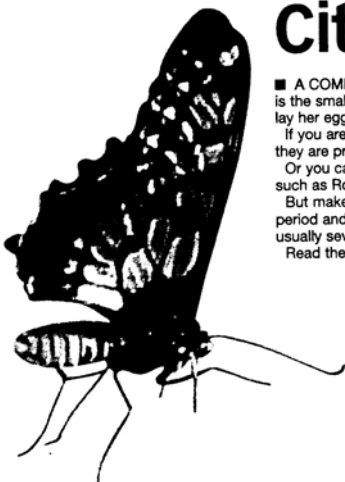
Sesbania cannabina

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc. for membership enquiries and annual membership payments (\$10):
Treasurer, 9 Parkers Road, TORRENS PARK 5062

Thanks to members who contacted the Messenger Newspaper commenting on Malcolm Campbell's article on the 'Citrus pest' in February, this followed a previous article published in the 'Messenger' December 2003.

Malcolm printed an acknowledgement that some readers were not in favour of his suggestions in the following edition of the 'Messenger' and it is hoped that he will now be a supporter of butterflies and retention of their habitat.

yourgarden — MALCOLM CAMPBELL
www.greenfingers.com.au



Citrus pest

■ A COMMON butterfly on the wing at present is the small citrus butterfly, which is looking to lay her eggs on a citrus of any sort near you. If you are pretty agile you can net them, as they are pretty slow fliers.
Or you can spray with a systemic insecticide such as Rogor, Systex or Confidor. But make sure you observe the withholding period and not eat the fruit within that time, usually seven to 10 days. Read the product label to make sure.

Only a minor pest
It is disappointing that gardening columnist Malcolm Campbell has again advocated heavy handed control of the small citrus butterfly (Citrus pest", *Eastern Courier Messenger*, February 15).

The small citrus butterfly, *Papilio anactus*, also know as the dingy swallowtail or dainty swallowtail, is Australian native butterfly, the larvae of which feed on a range of native plants and the leaves of young citrus trees.

It became established in Adelaide in the 1920s, having migrated from the eastern states via the irrigated orchards of the Murray Valley. Contrary to the impression given in the gardening columns, its numbers around Adelaide are never particularly high and at worst it is only a minor pest.

Any control needed is easily carried out by hand removal of the individual caterpillars, but in spite of growing citrus trees in Adelaide for more than 30 years this, I have never found this to be necessary.

On the contrary, this is a largely benign and attractive butterfly and its graceful flight should be welcomed as and ornamentation to my garden.

Like many of our native butterflies, particularly in urban areas, its numbers seem to be declining and our concern should be for the conservation not destruction.

COLIN HARRIS
Rosslyn Park

Citrus pest is a Native from the Eastern Courier Messenger 22/2/2006
Can you imagine a world without butterflies? Your grandchildren may never see one. I have a long family association with butterflies. My grandfather and his brother and the Lower family – were the first to catalogue most of the butterflies across southern Australia.

I believe the so called citrus butterfly that Malcolm Campbell wants us to destroy ("Citrus pest." Feb 15) is, in fact the native dusky swallowtail, the only natural swallowtail in SA.

Its natural food plant has vanished but it has been clever enough to adapt to citrus leaves, but rarely enough to damage a tree or harm a crop.

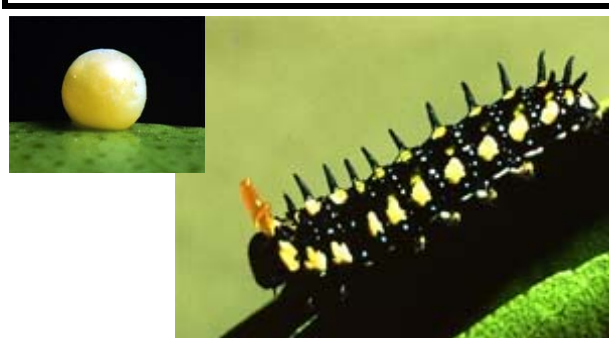
The beautiful monarch or wander butterfly is also threatened. A natural migrant to Australia in the 1850's, its larval food is the wild cotton or milk bush (*Asclepias*), but these harmless little plants are being destroyed because "they take up space where a native plant could grow".

This is indeed a shame because another little true native, the lesser wander now relies on these plants for its food.

Keen SA gardeners love butterflies and plant shrubs to attract them, but "butterfly bushes" are not the larval food sources and the native weeds, nettles and grasses that used to feed five or six large butterflies we had – and countless tiny ones- are fast disappearing.

Please let's stop killing them and let's plant some food stock for them. A little milk bush in the corner of your garden will never be noticed.

GEORGE CULSHAW
Glen Osmond



Papilio anactus (Dainty Swallowtail) egg and larva
Photos: RHFisher



Figs 7,8. Strzelecki Desert



Fig 9. Large Grass Yellow Photo RHFisher

Fig 10. *Sesbania cannabina*

Figs 11,12. Common Eggfly, female & male Photo: RHFisher

At Innamincka the Cooper Creek was flowing water and at the causeway was a good representation of the local riverside flora, but unfortunately much of it was eaten back by stock and town animals. Away from the causeway virtually no low-growing vegetation remained. Cullyamurra Waterhole (Fig. 4) on the Cooper Creek to the east of Innamincka was visited, where the riverside vegetation was found to be quite luxuriant due to the lack of grazing stock. A small colony of the Dark Grass-blue (*Zizeeria karsandra*) and its prostrate hostplant Hairy Carpet-weed (*Glinus lotoides*) was seen, and the Wattle Blue (*Theclinesthes miskini*) was common and seen to be using the Yellow Pea-bush (*Sesbania cannabina*) (Fig 10) as a hostplant instead of its more usual *Acacia* host.

Coongie Lake was visited, hoping for better butterfly diversity. Lakeside (Figs 5,6) had good plant diversity and included Bluerod (*Stemodia florulenta*) (Fig 5) and Common Verbena (**Verbena officinalis*). Yellow Pea-bush (Fig 6) was thick and was being used by the Long-tailed Pea-blue (*Lampides boeticus*) and the Common Grass-blue (*Zizina labradus*) as a hostplant, which are new hostplant records for S.A. Unfortunately, the rare (in SA) northern yellow migrant the Large Grass-yellow (*Eurema hecabe*) (Fig 9) that also uses the plant was nowhere to be seen. Many caterpillars of the Meadow Argus (*Junonia villida*) were seen on the verbena, but interestingly none were seen on the bluerod that the butterfly uses as a hostplant around Marla in the west of South Australia. The Rayed Blue (*Candalides heathi*) also uses the latter plant but the butterfly was not seen at Coongie. I managed to pick up the ubiquitous Coongie Lake mouse in my engine compartment. Everybody reports picking up a mouse either inside the engine compartment or even inside their car while visiting the area. My car still seems to be running OK. (One couple reported having to entertain a mouse inside their car for the remaining duration of their trip.)

Venturing further northwards, I went looking for Bitterbush (*Adriana tomentosa* var. *hookeri*), the hostplant for the inland form of the small Bitterbush Blue (*Theclinesthes albocincta*), as small colonies of the plant had been historically recorded from the area. I went as far as Arrabury without recognising the plant roadside and which was quite easy to do considering the very poor condition of the vegetation. At Montkeleary Creek crossing there was windmill grass (*Enteropogon*), the host plant for the endemic Inland Grass Skipper, but the grass was in very dry condition and no evidence for the skipper was seen. On the return trip a small colony of bitterbush was stumbled upon near Leap Year Bore but the plants were very depauperate due to the intense summer heat and lack of rain and there was no evidence for the Bitterbush Blue. As a final side trip, the red dune area in the vicinity of the Keleary Oilfield was visited, and which supported some nice local vegetation but only common types of butterflies were seen.

My impressions of the region were that it was generally miserable country (at least for the time of year) and is aptly named the Strzelecki Desert (Figs 7,8), although one does wonder what the habitat was like before intensive stock grazing hit the region 130 years ago. The main highlights were the Coongie Lake, Cullyamurra Waterhole and the red dunes in the vicinity of Keleary. Very hungry flies and mosquitoes were a drawback. Except for the Dark Grass-blue, only common types of butterflies were seen during the trip. The migrant butterflies such as the White Migrant (*Catopsilia pyranthe*), Common Eggfly (*Hypolimnas bolina*) (Figs 11,12), Large Grass-yellow and others from northern tropical areas were not seen, even though they have been historically recorded from the region and even their hostplants can be locally present. It would seem these butterflies are very dependent on local conditions and the quality of the breeding season in their normal breeding habitat further to the north.

ALBERTUS SEGA'S PICTORIAL COLLECTION

Albertus Sega, born in East Frisia in 1665, was an apothecary with a shop in Amsterdam who combined a successful and highly profitable business with a passion for collecting natural specimens. He traded in drugs from overseas, supplied departing ships with cases of medicines and treated their crews. It is related how, whenever a ship arrived in port, Seba would hasten down to the harbour and administer to the exhausted sailors and in return would purchase any natural specimens they had brought with them. He became famous not only for assembling a wealth of specimens but also for his recordings and meticulous drawings.

On 30th October 1731 a contract was signed in Amsterdam between three parties: Seba and the agents of two publishing houses agreed to produce a major work of 400 plates depicting Seba's collection. Ultimately, the Thesaurus incorporated a magnificent 446 plates, 175 of them doublepage. The four volumes appeared over a span of 30 years, from 1734 -1765 and cover plants, and animals including lizards, birds, frogs, spiders, snakes and an imposing variety of sea creatures. The insecta, including the lepidoptera, are presented in nearly 100 plates in Volume IV. In 2004 the publishing house Taschen, renowned for its art reproductions, released a book "BUTTERFLIES – Albertus Sega", ISBN 3-8228-2431-3, which contains many of the plates from this volume depicting the insects.

Publication of a work like the Thesaurus called for considerable sums of money. Hugely expensive to produce were above all the many illustration plates, whose engraving was a laborious and drawn-out task. The names of no less than 13 artists are recorded as being employed on the transferral of the drawings, frontispiece, and portrait to the copperplates. The expensive work was initially published in black-and-white. It is not known whether the publishers also offered a hand-painted edition, which would naturally have raised the price and profit margin considerably. Buyers probably had the work painted at their own extra expense by specialist colourists. The gorgeous colours add substantially to the attractiveness of the plates, but their purpose was not just aesthetic enhancement. They had a scientific use as well. Some specimens, such as those of butterflies, are only distinguishable by their colouring.

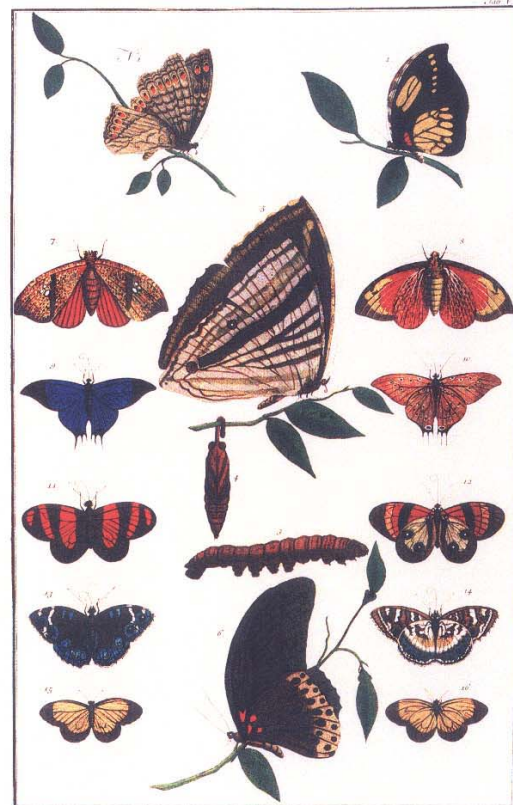
Whether or not originally in colour, whether or not based on existing illustrations, the Thesaurus remains an impressive example of a Baroque book.

Acknowledgments to Taschen, Hohenzollernring 53 D-50672 Köln, and to Irmgard Mosch for the foreword from which the above is taken.

Trevor Rowe



Tropical butterflies distributed worldwide and caddis flies - Tropische Tagfalter mit weltweiter Verbreitung und Köcherfliegen - Papillons diurnes tropicaux répandus dans le monde entier et trichoptères - Mariposas tropicales diurnas con difusión mundial y Trichoptera



Butterflies from America, Africa, Arabia and the region encompassing South-East Asia to North Australia - Tagfalter aus Amerika, Afrika, Arabien und von Südostasien bis nach Nordaustralien - Papillons diurnes d'Amérique, d'Afrique, d'Arabie et de la zone Asie du Sud-Est - Australie du Nord - Mariposas de América, África, Arabia y desde el sureste asiático hasta el norte de Australia

WEBSITE ADDRESSES: 'Butterflies of South Australia' <http://www.chariot.net.au/~rgrund/index.htm>
BCSA <http://www.chariot.net.au/~bcsa/index.htm>

Recorded butterflies from the region during the trip were: **Swallowtails**; none seen: **Whites and Yellows**; Caper White (*Belenois java*): **Brushfoots**; Lesser Wanderer (*Danaus chrysippus*), Meadow Argus, Australian Painted Lady (*Vanessa kershawi*): **Blues**; Long-tailed Pea-blue, Two-spotted Line-blue (*Nacaduba biocellata*), Wattle Blue, Salt-bush Blue (*Theclinesthes serpentata*), Dark Grass-blue, Common Grass-blue: **Skippers**; none seen.

On the return trip I checked out the colony of Tree Caper (*Capparis mitchellii*) at Balcanoona and Italowie Gorge in the North Flinders Ranges. The Narrow-winged Pearl-white (*Elodina padusa*) was in full flight but the larger Caper White was nowhere to be seen even though it is usually very common about the Caper Trees in spring and summer, suggesting that this butterfly is not permanently resident in the area, being replenished annually by spring migrations from northern tropical areas.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 14th August, 2006

7.30pm

Urrbrae Wetlands Centre,
Cross Road, URRBRAE

Guest Speakers: Jill Davy-Warren— short power point presentation of local butterflies
Roger Grund—Butterflies from far North of South Australia
Please bring a plate of supper to share

EXCURSION TO MINAWARRA 5th February, 2006

17 members attended. Butterflies recorded include: Common brown - *Heteronympha merope merope*; Ringed xenica - *Geitoneura acantha ocrea*; Cabbage butterfly - *Pieris rapae*; Painted lady - *Vanessa kershawi*; Common grass blue- *Zizinia otis labradus*; Wanderer - *Danaus plexippus*; Varied Sedge-skipper - *Hesperilla donysa*; Flame Sedge-skipper - *Hesperilla idothea*.



Photos
Left:
Lunch spot
Bottom left:
Gahnia sieberiana
swamp
Bottom right:
Jill Davy-Warren

Caper White, *Belenois java ssp. teutonia*, a resident butterfly on Kangaroo Island.

by D.A. (Andy) Young, R.S.D 330, Newlands Service via KINGSCOTE, S.A. 5223:

I read with interest Brian Heywood's observations of the massive migration of Caper Whites last spring and thought I'd share several observations of this butterfly I made around the same time on Kangaroo Island.

I first noted individuals flying near Parndana in the middle of K.I on the 19th of October after giving a butterfly talk to the local Primary School. There was a butterfly every (estimated) 100ft or so along the first fifteen km of the Hickman's Rd. south of Parnie. The weather was pretty good at the time. The following day was quite overcast and I walked to the "Little Sahara", 30km south of Parndana and about 7km east of Vivonne Bay, to look for *Antipodia atralba* (the Diamond Sand, or Black and White Skipper) pupa. While there, a couple of quite heavy showers of rain fell, but even so, several Capers were noted in the area. In fact, they were the only butterfly flying that day. The migration was mentioned during a Dept. of Environment and Heritage environmental forum several weeks later, and the following interesting fact came to light; Rick Southgate and Pip Masters are growing the Bush Caper, *Capparis spinescens*, as a food-crop near Kingscote on K.I. Rick asked about a caterpillar eating the plants- sometimes in huge numbers- and it turns out to be the Caper White that's responsible.

Further evidence appears to confirm that not only are the northern migrations seeding further generations on the Island, but that the butterfly survives as pupae through the relatively mild K.I winter. This was confirmed by Rick and Pip who have observed the presence of all stages as early as August on and around the plants. I am getting a series of K.I Caper Whites for the museum collection, the only impediment being that Rick and Pip's young daughter not only enjoys rearing the butterflies through, but then likes to release them in the house where they fly around until they run out of energy. Pip assured me she'll sneak away some of the pupae so I can put some "K.I." bred members of this species into the SAMuseum collection for future reference of researchers working on the distribution of this species.

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 > or <forrestjan@adam.com.au>

Treasurer : 9 Parkers Road, TORRENS PARK. 5062

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.

Next Meeting: Monday 10th July at 6.00pm

AGM will be held Monday 14th August at 7.30pm.

EXCURSIONS—October or November 2006 information in the next newsletter.

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:

Gill Hoskins
Heather Whiting
Edda Viskic
W.P.Renwick
Cheryl Hill
Deborah Brine
Loretta Morandin
Simon Brown
Patricia Lathlean
D and R Pratt
Colin Harris
Diana Koch
Yasuhiro Nakamura
Elsbeth Reid

