



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

NEWSLETTER

No. 4, July 2000

Dingy Swallowtail (*Papilio anactus* W.S.Macleay)

For the full data sheet information go to Roger Grund's website
<[www. Adelaide.net.au/~rbg/anactus_ds.htm](http://www.Adelaide.net.au/~rbg/anactus_ds.htm)>

An Australian swallowtail of ancient Gondwanaland origin that has evolved on the native citrus plants found in the eastern states and



quickly adapted to introduced *Citrus* trees. This butterfly can now be found in most areas where these trees are cultivated.

Eggs: Large, pale yellow, nearly spherical, basally flattened, smooth. Laid singly on the foodplant.

Larvae: Initially dark coloured, with two subdorsal rows of short bristly, fleshy spines. Broad transverse yellowish bands give the impression of 'bird dropping' camouflage pattern.

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Members and friends of Butterfly Conservation SA
are invited to attend the inaugural

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held at our new meeting rooms

Urrbrae Wetlands Meeting room, Cross Roads Urrbrae.

on Monday 13th August at 7.30pm

Following the meeting Mike Moore will speak of *Ogyris subterrestis*
Please bring a plate

WHAT'S IN A BUTTERFLY'S NAME—UNDERSTANDING BUTTERFLY CLASSIFICATION, SCIENTIFIC NAMES AND COMMON NAMES.

Butterfly Classification

In the study of living things, **classification** is the ordering of organisms into groups on the basis of their relationships. Most criteria used to distinguish groups, in the past at least, have been structural - a large group of different kinds of organisms is sorted into smaller groups according to likenesses in structural characteristics. Increasingly though, physiological and biochemical criteria are being used. The groups are referred to as **taxa** (singular **taxon**), eg **phylum, class, order, family, genus, species** and **sub-species**. Taxa are arranged in a hierarchy - a Class consists of Orders, an order of Families, etc.

Amongst animals, butterflies are classified as follows:

Phylum ARTHROPODA (arthropods)
jointed-limbed animals with hardened exoskeletons (i.e. skeletons on the outside of the body)

Class INSECTA (insects)
normally three pairs of legs, three major body regions, one pair of antennae; and one or two pairs of wings

Order LEPIDOPTERA (butterflies and moths)
characterised by the presence of scales on the wings and body

Of the approximately 20,000 butterfly species in the world, there are about 400 species in Australia. In South Australia, there are 74 species, in five Families of butterflies:

HESPERIIDAE (skippers) 19 species -
small, rather drab coloured, a rapid 'jerky' flight gives them their common name 'skippers'

PAPILIONIDAE (swallowtails) 3 species -
medium to large, generally colourful, sometimes with tails on hindwings

PIERIDAE (whites and yellows) 8 species -
medium size, often plain white or yellow, but sometimes brightly multi-coloured

NYMPHALIDAE (browns, danais, nymphs and satyrids) 18 species -
medium to large, usually dark coloured, often with eye-spots on wings

LYCAENIDAE (blues, coppers, hairstreaks) 26 species -
very small to medium, often blue or copper-orange above, sometimes with metallic lustre, often associated with ants

Butterfly Names - Scientific Names and Common Names

There are strict rules for applying names to **taxonomic** groups, the object being that each different type of organism can be given a unique identity, its **scientific name**, using the names of just two or three of the taxonomic categories to which the organism is ascribed. **The species level is the basic unit of classification.** Put simply, this group consists of individuals capable of interbreeding, and possessing characteristics that distinguish the group from other species.



Kath Alcock sketch

The **scientific name** is a **binomial** (two names) or **trinomial** (three names) designation of an organism. It is given in the form of Latinised (or Latin or Greek) words, usually written in italics, and comprises the name of the genus in which an organism is placed, followed by the name of the species. For example, the logo species of BCSA is the beautiful Wood White, and its scientific name is *Delias aganippe*, i.e. the genus is *Delias*, and the species (the specific epithet that is) is *aganippe*. The binomial identity is generally referred to as the 'species'. This is sometimes followed by a third name being that of a particular **sub-species** (thus a trinomial), which is just a further division of the species group, usually differentiating between slightly different forms of a species that are separated geographically.

Continued next page.....

Scientific Names vs. Common Names

Q. What butterfly is that?

A. It's *Hesperilla chrysotricha*.

Q. It's what?! What's its common name?

A. I call it the Chrysotricha Skipper, but it could also be called the Golden-haired Sedge-skipper, or perhaps the Plebia Skipper or Shoreline Skipper in Tasmania.

Q. But why not just one common name?

A. Because, unlike a **scientific name** which **establishes a butterfly's formal identity** in order to facilitate unambiguous communication, often amongst scientists and other specialists across the globe, **common names are not derived according to any set of rules and tend to vary both between and within regions.**

Scientific names are necessary in science, but many people may be 'put-off', perhaps because scientific names are difficult to pronounce or remember. **Common names** overcome these difficulties, allowing information on matters such as distribution, ecology and conservation status to be communicated effectively amongst non-specialists. In contrast to scientific names, common names can be used more effectively to stimulate interest in butterflies, leading to a greater understanding and appreciation of butterflies, particularly, for example, amongst the general public. It is hard to imagine many people referring to the (introduced) pestiferous white butterflies flitting about their backyard vegetables as *Pieris rapae*, rather than simply as the Cabbage White, or to the common blue (native) butterflies in field and garden as *Zizina labradus* rather than as the Common Grass-blue!

At present there is no fully accepted, standardised list of common names for Australian butterflies, although a provisional list was recently introduced (Braby *et al.* 1997). BCSA is yet to formally compile and adopt a list of recommended common names for South Australian butterflies, so readers may note occasional inconsistencies in the use of common names in newsletters. This simply reflects the differing preferences of the various authors.

Marcus Pickett

References

Braby, M. F., Atkins, A. F., Dunn, K. L., Woodger, T. A. and Quick, W. N. B. (1997). A provisional list of common names for Australian butterflies. *Australian Journal of Entomology*, **36**, pp. 197-212.

MEMBER PROFILE - Jan Forrest OAM

Jan currently holds the position of Secretary of BCSA and produces our Newsletter.

She has had a lifelong interest in insects, joining the staff of the South Australian Museum on 1st May 1963. She has continued in the Entomology section since that time and now holds the position of Senior Collection Manager of the Terrestrial Invertebrate Sections.



An experienced collector Jan has traveled extensively throughout South Australia for the Museum collecting insects and as a qualified photographer she has had numerous photographs published in scientific publications. Jan recently project managed the Museum exhibition "Where have all the Butterflies Gone?" and worked closely with members of BCSA in the creation of this exhibition.

Jan was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in June 1991 for her work in the community especially with young people through her association with Guides SA, the Scout Association, Youth Hostels Association, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Mitcham Community Development Board and as a volunteer bus driver for the Unley Council.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.
Proposed Membership (Aug AGM) \$10.00 pa
Applications to: David Keane
c/- P.O. INGLEWOOD, 5133 S.A.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

13th August, 2000
 At the Urrbrae Wetlands meeting rooms
 Cross Roads, URRBRAE

AGENDA

Apologies

- Reports - Chairman (Beth Keane)
 - Treasurer (David Keane)

Adoption of Reports

Membership fees

The executive committee recommend that the 2000/2001 fee be set at \$10.

Any Other Business

Election of Office Bearers for 2000/2001

- Chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- up to 12 ordinary members

Close of business meeting

Guest Speaker:

Mike Moore will speak on *Ogyris subterrestris*

Members and Guests are invited to remain for supper.

(please bring a plate)

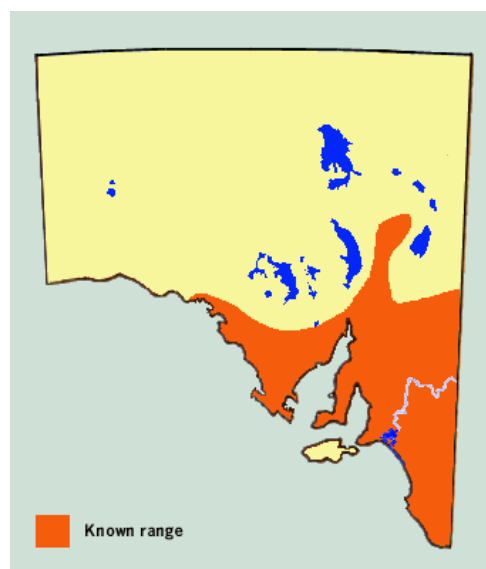
Dingy Swallowtail continued from page 1.

Pupae: slender straight, stick like about 30mm long, usually attached to the stems of foodplant. It reclines from the vertical and is attached to the stem by a central silken girdle. Colour either green, grey brown with variable cryptic marking.

Flight period in SA: flies during warmer months, usually from October to early May. Continuous broods can be completed in as little as 5-6 weeks.

Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun

Distribution:



Habitat: An open forest and woodland butterfly in its eastern states habitat. A native foodplant *Eremocitrus glauca* (desert lime) occurs in the far north pastoral areas but is too rare to support viable populations of the butterfly. It is generally considered to be an urban and orchard butterfly in South Australia.

Conservation Status in SA: a local butterfly, rarely common.

Threats: considered a minor pest in *Citrus* orchards and is not normally sprayed, but will succumb if other *Citrus* pests require spraying.

Conservation Strategy: Butterfly numbers are not deteriorating in South Australia, so a conservation strategy is not required. In the urban environment its larvae may defoliate young *Citrus* trees, but this can be managed by hand removal or thinning of the larvae. Established *Citrus* trees should not be troubled by the larvae.

Roger Grund

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The current committee would like to encourage members to consider joining the committee as an office bearer or member. You will be most welcome.

Committee meetings are held monthly on the first Monday of the month 6.00 pm to around 8.30pm so it's not a late night!

You can nominate from the floor or speak to a current committee member to arrange a formal nomination prior to the meeting.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

South Australian Museum

NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5000. TELEPHONE: (08) 207 7500. FACSIMILE: (08) 207 7390.

Entomology, 15 May 00

The Secretary, BC SA
Dear Jan,

The South Australian Museum collection of butterflies is housed in some 700 drawers, containing more than 36,000 specimens. The Australian butterfly fauna is particularly well represented, and includes many type and paratype specimens. In addition, there is quite a large representation of the fauna from other regions, such as Europe, North and South America, Asia, New Guinea, Africa etc. There are also many hundreds of unmounted, papered specimens, largely from the collection of the late Norman Tindale, whose collection was bequeathed to the Museum after his death in 1993. A major task in the future is to relax and mount these specimens, and incorporate them into the collection.

For the past fifteen years I have endeavoured to bring up-to-date the taxonomic classification of this collection although, of course, taxonomy (and subsequently the scientific nomenclature) of butterflies is constantly under review. Hence, the printed labels on each drawer, and those beneath each group of specimens, can be considered to be reasonably accurate. In fact, I have been told by a senior entomologist from CSIRO Canberra that our collection is highly regarded.

I am grateful to various members of BCSA who have devoted time to assist in the maintenance of the butterfly collection in recent months, particularly as my own ability to do this work has been declining. I am at present trying to compile an index (or "guide") to the various genera, so that those not familiar with our collection will be able to locate any species in which they are interested with minimal effort. This index will be based on a numerical numbering of the rows of cabinets, and the vertical rows of drawers in these cabinets.

I hope this information is of interest to Butterfly Conservation SA members.

Sincerely,



(Honorary Research Associate)

Q Why is it that a butterfly is so called?

Flutterby makes more sense. They don't even like butter.

P.Ford Northampton

A. Butterflies are so called because one of the first butterflies to be seen in early spring is the Brimstone, which is a bright yellow, the colour of butter, and this gave the butterfly its name.
Mary French, Gread Baddow, Essex

A. I thought that this was a well-known spoonerism. When I taught English, I used a reference book which stated that "butterfly" is one of the few spoonerisms (possibly the only one) that passed into the English language. The original word was "flutterby", which makes more sense, but it was changed permanently one day as the result of someone's spoonerism.
John Cohen, Minfield West, Yorkshire.

REFERENCE: International Express Newspaper

ED: Perhaps members of BCSA have other information on the origin of the word "Butterfly"?

BOOK REVIEW

Butterfly Conservation, T.R.New

Oxford University Press Australia 1991. ISBN 0 19 553228 7

Some of our members would have met Tim New at the biodiversity workshop in January. Tim hails from Melbourne, where he is Reader in Zoology at La Trobe University. He has a wide interest in systematics, ecology and conservation.

This book provides a broad survey of the emerging science of butterfly conservation, tracing the causes of declining populations. It illustrates current attempts to conserve particular butterfly species, local assemblages and whole faunas. The references and practical advice will be of interest to entomologists, naturalists and conservationists.

Whilst being technically comprehensive it is also very user friendly for the interested amateur, and has extremely enlightening chapters on Butterfly Gardening and Rearing and Maintaining Butterflies.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SA Inc.

Chairman: Beth Keane, C/- PO INGLEWOOD 5133 ph 08) 83892352

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 and Membership Secretary: David Keane, C/- P.O., INGLEWOOD 5133 ph 08) 83892352

email <dkeane@iweb.net.au >

Fundraising: Lois Hasenohr

Committee members: Marcus Pickett, Roger Grund, Lindsay Hunt, Mike Moore, and Bob Edge

Honorary Member: RH (Bob) Fisher OAM

DIARY DATES

EXHIBITION

The South Australian Museum in collaboration with members of Butterfly Conservation SA present the Exhibition: "Where have all the Butterflies Gone" Level 3 South Australian Museum. **Exhibition will close mid August 2000**

MEETINGS

Meetings of the committee are held on regular intervals and all members are welcome to attend. If you would like further information or receive an agenda please contact the Secretary Jan Forrest C/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide telephone 82077503 (w) or 82978230 (h and message bank) or via email on <forrest.jan@saugov.sa.gov.au>.

AGM

Monday 14th August.

WEBSITE (produced by Roger Grund)

'South Australian Butterflies' <http://www.adelaide.net.au/~reid/>

We welcome the following new members:

MICHELLE BURROWS
NOELENE CARTER
MARCO SACCHI
WANDA YERTA NATIVE PLANTS
IVY COCKS
REBECCA DUFFIELD
MARY KING
STAN POLLEY
BARRY LINCOLN
JASON P HUEBNER
JOANNE & JOHN LEWIS
DI WISKICH
YVONNE STEED
VICKI-JO RUSSELL
BRIGITTE BUTLER
BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION (UK)
CULLEN FAMILY
EVA SQUIRE
ROSANNE TAYLOR
DUNCAN MACKAY
PETER BURDON

