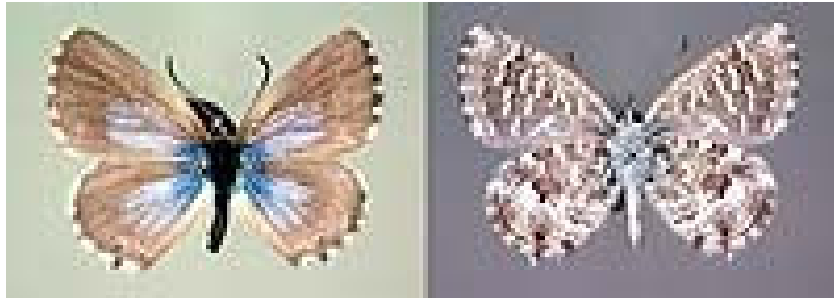


SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUTTERFLIES

Data Sheet

Theclinesthes serpentata serpentata (Herrich-Schaffer) (Salt-bush Blue)



Interesting aspects: The butterflies normally fly very close to the foodplants.

Life History

Larval food-host: Larvae feed mainly on saltbushes including *Atriplex acutibractea*, *A. australasica* (native orache or green saltbush), *A. cinerea* (coast saltbush), *A. eichleri* (Eichler's saltbush), *A. elachophylla*, *A. holocarpa* (pop saltbush), *A. leptocarpa* (slender-fruit saltbush), *A. limbata* (spreading saltbush), *A. lindleyi* & ssp (baldoos), *A. lobativalvis*, *A. macropterocarpa*, *A. morrisii*, *A. muelleri* (annual or Mueller's saltbush), *A. nummularia nummularia* (old-man saltbush), *A. obconica*, *A. paludosa paludosa* (marsh saltbush), *A. paludosa cordata* (marsh saltbush), **A. pumilio* (mat saltbush), *A. pseudocampanulata* (spreading saltbush), *A. quinii* (kidney-fruit saltbush), *A. rhagodioides* (river saltbush), *A. semibaccata* (berry saltbush), *A. spongiosa* (pop saltbush), *A. suberecta* (lagoon saltbush), *A. velutinella* (sandhill saltbush), *A. vesicaria variabilis* (bladder saltbush), **Chenopodium album* (fat hen or white goosefoot), *C. curvispicatum*, *C. gaudichaudianum* (scrambling goosefoot), *C. nitrariaceum* (nitre goosefoot), *Einadia nutans nutans* (climbing saltbush), *E. nutans oxycarpa* (pointed-fruit climbing saltbush), *Halosarcia halocnemoides* (grey samphire), *Rhagodia candolleana candolleana* (seaberry saltbush), *R. crassifolia* (fleshy saltbush), *R. eremaea* (desert saltbush), *R. parabolica* (fragrant or mealy saltbush), *R. preissii preissii* (mallee saltbush), *R. spinescens* (spiny saltbush) (Chenopodiaceae); also on *Atalaya hemiglauca* (whitewood) (Sapindaceae). The larvae eat both the leaves and flower heads of the foodplant.

Larval attendant ant: Larvae are attended by a few ants, usually small black or brown *Iridomyrmex* spp, but occasionally also by a small black sugar-ant *Camponotus ceriseipes*, small black *Monomorium rubriceps*, a small red bull-ant of the *Myrmecia nigrocincta* gp, and a small black *Notoncus* sp.

Eggs:

Larvae: Mature larvae are 8-9mm long.

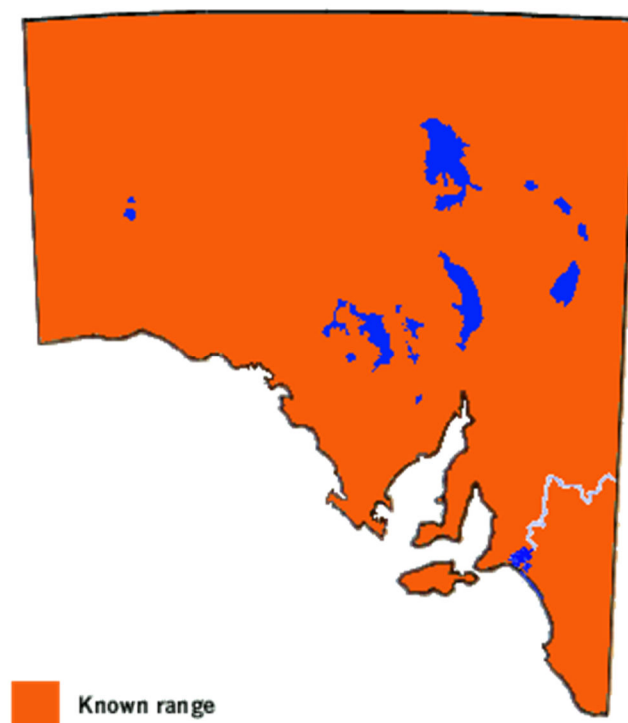
Pupae: 5-7mm long.

Flight period in S.A.: It is possible to find flying butterflies throughout the year, depending on the region. In the southern areas it is more common during the warmer months from September to May. There is sometimes a mass emergence of the butterfly when hundreds of butterflies are seen flying around the foodplants.



Distribution: Occurs through much of temperate and subtropical Australia, including Kangaroo Island and Tasmania. Rare in the wet colder areas of South Australia. It is rare or absent along the Pacific coastal shoreline of the eastern states, where it is replaced by *Theclinesthes sulpitius*. A separate subspecies occurs in Tasmania.

The butterfly may have some degree of dispersal ability (typical of the Polyommata group of lycaenids), as their adult morphology is uniform and they often turn-up in areas that would normally be considered as unsuitable habitat.



Habitat: Found wherever its foodplants occur, and these are common and widespread, being present in most habitats.

Conservation Status in S.A.: Locally common in breeding areas and in certain locations may be the most common butterfly.

Threats: No major threats.

Conservation Strategy: None required. Will occur in urban gardens.

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