

INFORMATION SHEET



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Melbourne's Butterflies series

Meadow Argus Butterfly

Junoia villida

Identification

Wingspan 45 mm. Above, brown with orange patches and blue-centred eyespots to both pairs of wings; beneath, pale brown with markings as above to forewing but markings to the hindwing are more obscure.



Upperside of female Meadow Argus
Photographer: Rodney Start / Source: Museum Victoria



Upperside of female Meadow Argus
Photographer: Ross Field / Source: Museum Victoria

Habitat

It occurs throughout the Melbourne region, where it is often seen flying in open areas, feeding on flowers or resting on the ground with the wings open. It is a common and widespread species in Australia, ranging from coastal regions to central Australia.

Notes

One of the first spring butterflies in Victoria. Common food plants for this species are native and introduced Rat's Tails (*Plantago* species). The mature larvae are black, with numerous short, thick, branched spines. The larvae shelter during the day under leaves on the ground, emerging at night to feed. The pupae are black with white or reddish yellow patches and are suspended head-down from the tip of the abdomen. This butterfly sometimes undertakes migratory flights.



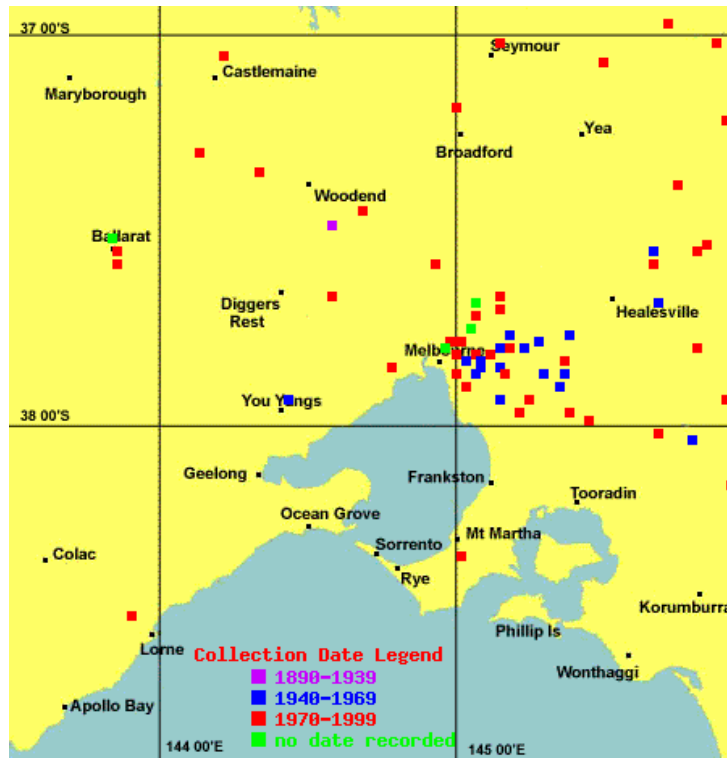
Larva of the Meadow Argus about to pupate
Photographer / Source: M & P Coupar



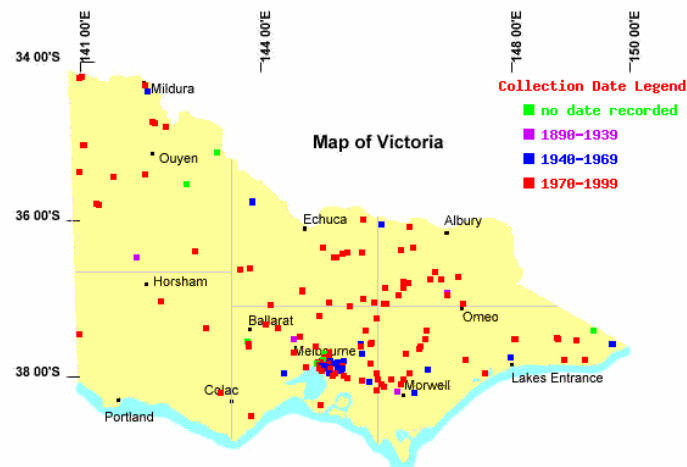
Pupa of the Meadow Argus with shed larval skin
Photographer: Ross Field / Source: Museum Victoria



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Distribution and record dates for the Meadow Argus near Melbourne (Source Butterfly Bioinformatics, Museum Victoria)



Distribution and record dates for the Meadow Argus in Victoria (Source Butterfly Bioinformatics, Museum Victoria)

Further reading

Braby, M. F. 2000. *Butterflies of Australia: Their Identification, Biology and Distribution*. CSIRO Publishing.
Common, I. F. B. and Waterhouse, D. F. 1981. *Butterflies of Australia* (revised edition). Angus & Robertson.

Internet Resources

Bioinformatics website of Museum Victoria:
<http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/butter/>

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