

Fauna fact sheet

Richmond birdwing butterfly

Scientific Name: *Ornithoptera richmindia*

Common Name: Richmond birdwing butterfly

Status: (NC(W)R 1994): Vulnerable

Distribution: Two isolated populations – Kin Kin to Mt Mee and Nerang to Wardell (NSW).

Habitat: Coastal rainforests in the lowlands and ranges.

Description: Males wingspan up to 13 cm, females larger up to 16 cm. Coloration as in images below.

Habits: Larvae feed on particular vine species (*Paristolochia praevanosa* (lowlands) and *P. laheyana* (ranges)). Larvae are poisoned by the exotic environmental weed; Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*) which they cannot distinguish from the native species. Adult males (pictured) very obvious amongst foliage.

Comments: Butterfly populations persist wherever food vines occur in high enough densities (10+ vines per locality). Numbers reduced and populations isolated through clearing of vegetation.



Photos courtesy of Don Sands, CSIRO