

## RICHMOND BIRDWING BUTTERFLY

Vulnerable

Endangered

Critically Endangered

Extinct in the Wild

Extinct



### Common name

Richmond birdwing butterfly

### Scientific name

*Ornithoptera richmondia*

### Habitat

Mainly subtropical rainforests where its larval host plant, the birdwing butterfly vine (*Pararistolochia praevanosa*), grows.

### Habitat range/distribution

The Richmond birdwing butterfly distribution once extended from Maryborough in southern Queensland to Grafton in northern New South Wales. Today its distribution is fragmented, with the species occurring in two main areas: from Cootharaba on the Sunshine Coast to near Caboolture, and from Ormeau and Mount Tamborine in the Gold Coast hinterland to Wardell in north-east New South Wales. The Richmond birdwing occasionally occurs in the greater Brisbane area but no breeding populations are currently established there.

### Description

The Richmond birdwing is one of Australia's largest butterflies, with a wingspan of up to 15cm in females and 13cm in males.

Males and females differ in appearance. Females have dark brown or black wings with extensive white, cream or, in the hindwing, yellowish markings. The upper forewing of males is black with a distinctive iridescent green leading edge, while the upper hindwing is predominantly iridescent green with black spots. The underside of the male's forewing is black with extensive green or blue-green markings, whereas the hindwing is largely blue, green and yellow with obvious black spots.

### Importance

All species are important because they each play an important and unique ecological role. They help maintain a healthy and diverse natural environment, contribute to our economy (through ecotourism), and are culturally significant to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Key threats

- Habitat loss and fragmentation.
- Inbreeding because of local populations becoming isolated.
- Occurrence of the invasive and toxic Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*) vine whose leaves are toxic and kill the larvae when they are eaten.

### What is being done to help protect and conserve this species

The Queensland Government is working with a wide range of partners to help conserve the Richmond birdwing butterfly through:

- planting of the lowland larval host plant
- a captive-breeding and release program
- removal of Dutchman's pipe
- mapping of the current distribution of the Richmond birdwing butterfly and its larval host plants.

### Become a Richmond birdwing butterfly champion

- Join the Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network (RBCN).
- Join one of the Citizen Science projects aimed at Richmond birdwing butterfly recovery.
- If your property falls within the Richmond birdwing's habitat corridor, plant some birdwing butterfly vines.
- Talk to your friends and family about threats to Richmond birdwing butterflies and what they can do to help.



# FIND THE FOOD!

Help this male Richmond birdwing butterfly find its way to its food!

The image features a large, complex maze with thick black walls. On the left side, a male Richmond birdwing butterfly is shown in profile, facing right. A dotted line extends from the butterfly's head into the maze. On the right side, there is a photograph of a red bottlebrush flower. A dotted line extends from the flower into the maze. The maze is designed to be a path-finding challenge.

