

Bright-eyed Brown (*Heteronympha cordace cordace*)



Bright-eyed Brown, *Heteronympha cordace cordace*, Female (top) and Male (below)
Photo: Hepburn Shire Council / iNaturalist.



Bright-eyed Brown, *Heteronympha cordace cordace*, Male, underside
Photo: Hepburn Shire Council / iNaturalist.

Other Common Names: None

Family of Butterflies: Nymphalidae (Browns and Nymphs)

Size: Wingspan males 38mm, females 42mm.

Local Records: Prior to the 2022-23 summer the only records in our region were from Trentham in 1916. Over the 2022/23 summer there were six reports on the [iNaturalist](#) website. As to be expected with a cooler climate species all records were from the south of the region, around Daylesford, Lyonville and Trentham.

Distribution outside our region: This species occurs mainly in wetter areas. Records stretch along the ranges from Mt Cole in the west to the NSW border with other records to the east of Melbourne and in the Strzelecki Range. Most recent records are east of Melbourne. West of Melbourne records are almost all pre-1970 or in 2023. In south-west Victoria and possibly the Grampians there are a few records of a second subspecies, *H. c. wilsoni*.

Larval Host Plants: Tall Sedge, *Carex appressa*.

Larval association with ants (Field 2013): None

Adult Flight Times in Victoria (from Field 2013): From November through March, peaking in January.

Conservation Status:

[National Butterfly Action Plan \(2002\)](#): *H. c. cordace*: Not listed. *H. c. wilsoni*: Critically Endangered.

[Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#): Not listed

Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act – [Threatened List](#): *H. c. cordace*: Not listed. *H. c. wilsoni*: Critically Endangered.

Other Notes: Four of the locations where this species has been found have been subjected to blackberry and willow control in preceding years that has allowed recolonization of Tall Sedge, *Carex appressa*, the main larval food plant and open conditions that have favoured summer-flowering nectar plants – in particular the introduced Creeping Buttercup and Birds-foot Trefoil. At Trent Creek, plantings of Prickly Tea Tree, *Leptospermum juniperinum*, reintroduced one of the known native food plants and these were being used by the Bright-eyed Browns in January 2021 (not formally reported until 2023). The species makes a good flagship for weed control in wetland areas. It is the emblem for the 2023 Chillout festival as the Lake Daylesford site has been adopted by the festival as an ongoing community planting site.¹

References:

Atlas of Living Australia – [Heteronympha cordace, Bright-eyed Brown](#).

iNaturalist Australia – [Heteronympha cordace, Bright-eyed Brown](#).

¹ Brian Bainbridge, Biodiversity officer, Hepburn Shire Council. Pers comm.