

Saltbush Blue (*Theclinesthes serpentata*)



Saltbush Blue, *Theclinesthes serpentata*, have a distinctive underwing pattern. Photo: Euan Moore



From the Tony Morton Collection. Photo: Tony Morton

Note 1: The upper side of the butterfly wings are shown on the left and the underside side of the butterfly wings are shown on the right. Males and females are similar.

Note 2: The plant name on the bottom right refers to the plants upon which the butterfly larvae (caterpillars) feed.

Other Common Names: Chequered Blue

Family of Butterflies: *Lycaenidae* (Blues and Coppers)

Size: Wingspan 18mm

Local Records: There are a few records from this area on [Atlas of Living Australia](#) and [iNaturalist](#) however this species is probably under-reported. Saltbush Blues may be seen in gardens around Castlemaine and at Moonlight Flat along Forest creek.

Tony Morton's documented records of Saltbush Blue from the local area (between 2000 to 2013): Five

Date	Location	Notes
5-Apr-2012	several	Vaughan garden
1-Nov-2006		The Monk, Chewton
4-Oct-2006		Vaughan garden
24 Feb '03	on saltbush in garden	Vaughan
20-Feb-2001	on <i>Einadia hastata</i> and <i>E. nutans</i>	Vaughan Garden

Distribution: In Victoria most records are from coastal areas around Port Philip Bay and in the north-west of the state. There are records from across much of mainland Australia below the Tropic of Capricorn and coastal areas of Tasmania.

Larval Host Plants: Larvae eat a range of saltbush plants (e.g. *Atriplex* sp. *Einadia* sp., *Rhagodia* sp.).

Larval association with ants: Larvae usually attended by ants from the genera of *Iridomyrmex*.

Adult Flight Times in Victoria: Adults have been recorded throughout the year in Victoria, although most of the few winter records are from the north-west of the state. Most commonly observed between November to March. Probably two generations per year.



Saltbush Blue, *Theclinesthes serpentata*, on *Rhagodia* sp. Photo: Euan Moore

Conservation Status:

[The Action plan for Australian Butterflies:](#) Vulnerable in Australia

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

[Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 – Threatened List:](#) Not Listed

Other Notes: Occurs where its saltbush plants occur in tidal flats and sand dunes, though also commonly in urban areas where its host plants have been planted.

References and further reading:

Atlas of Living Australia – [Theclinesthes serpentata](#), Saltbush Blue

iNaturalist - [Theclinesthes serpentata](#), Saltbush Blue