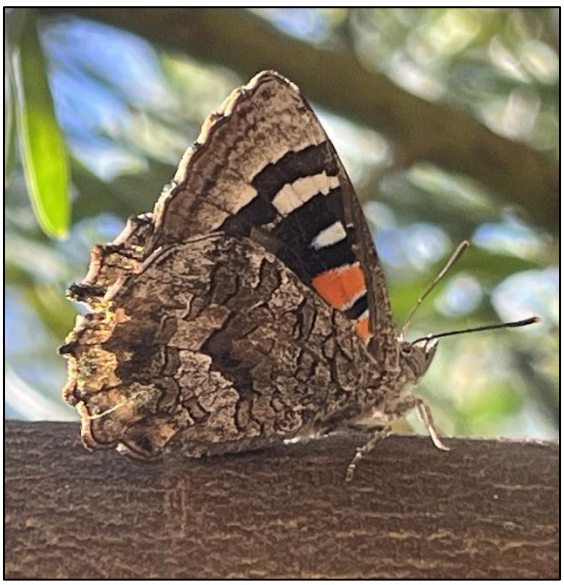
Utilisation of *Amyema preissii* (Wire Mistletoe) as a Post-Seeded Host Plant by *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* (Satin Azure)



Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis. Photo: Matt Endacott

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Summary

Surveys to determine the use of the artificially seeded mistletoe *Amyema preissii* (Wire Mistletoe) by the butterfly *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* (Satin Azure) were undertaken at seven sites in metropolitan Adelaide.

The survey identified mistletoe usage at two locations: Park 23 (G.S. Kingston Park, Adelaide Parklands) and the Marino Bike Path. Both sites confirmed the presence of mistletoes on *Acacia victoriae*.

The results vary and relate more to proximity to other populations, such as Marino Conservation Park, than to the number of mistletoe plants at each site.

The butterfly observations at Park 23 (G.S. Kingston Park, Adelaide Parklands) are interesting, as no other records in the immediate vicinity are known to occur. This indicates the butterfly's ability to traverse distances and the use of suitable larval host plants.

Several sites have been identified for further seeding, and Brownhill Creek has been selected for butterfly translocation if natural recolonisation does not take place.

Introduction

The butterfly, *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* (Satin Azure) is a common butterfly in South Australian where the larval food *Amyema spp*. (Mistletoes) occur. Whilst the butterfly is a robust flyer and able to cover reasonable distances, populations are restricted to where the larval host plants occur in the metropolitan areas.

Historically the butterfly was recorded in Adelaide by O. B. Lower (no date provided) and F. Angel in 1938 (ALA) however no precise details are provided.

Recent records indicate that the butterfly has been observed at Gepps Cross, Salisbury, Marino Conservation Park, and Onkaparinga River Recreational Park (iNaturalist).

The mistletoe species *Amyema preissii* (Wire Mistletoe) uses *Acacia* species as its host in metropolitan Adelaide, where it has historically been recorded (ALA).

The reintroduction of the Wire Mistletoe into areas of Adelaide was undertaken in 2023 (Stolarski 2023) to increase and/or create habitats and inter-connectivity corridors for invertebrate and other species that use the mistletoe for food and shelter.

Following the successful establishment of the mistletoe at sites, seven sites (Table 1) were banded using cardboard collars to survey for the presence of the butterfly's larvae and pupae (Fig 1-2). See Survey Site Map (Fig 3).

Table 1. Survey site locations.

Park Name	**Park Location**
St. Peters Billabong	St. Peters
Park 11 – Mistletoe Park	Adelaide Parklands
Park 27 – Bonython Park	Adelaide Parklands
Park 23 – G.S. Kingston Park	Adelaide Parklands
Brownhill Creek	Netley
Marino Bike Path	Marino
Hallett Cove CP	Hallett Cove

Figure 1. Banded *Acacia melanoxylon.*

Figure 2. Banded *Acacia victoriae.*

Survey Site Map

Figure 3. Survey Sites in metropolitan Adelaide.

Results

The survey identified mistletoe usage at two locations: Park 23 (G.S. Kingston Park, Adelaide Parklands) and the Marino Bike Path. Both sites confirmed the presence of mistletoes on *Acacia victoriae*.

The results vary and relate more to proximity to other populations, such as Marino Conservation Park, than to the number of mistletoe plants at each site.

The butterfly observations at Park 23 are interesting, as no other records in the immediate vicinity are known to occur. This indicates the butterfly's ability to traverse distances and the use of suitable larval host plants.

Three sites; St. Peter's Billabong, Park 23 and Hallett Cove Conservation Park have been identified for further seeding, and Brownhill Creek has been selected for butterfly translocation if natural recolonisation does not take place.

Additionally, a limited population of mistletoe plants was observed in the Perry's Bend area of Onkaparinga River Recreational Park, growing on Acacia pycnantha (Golden Wattle), which is not their usual host species.

The butterfly likely used these plants, as sightings have been documented (M. Endacott pers. obs., iNaturalist). Additional mistletoe seeding on *A. victoriae* in 2023 expanded the habitat and supported population growth. The use of seeded mistletoe was observed in March 2025 when a female *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* was found laying eggs (M. Endacott pers. obs., iNaturalist).

Sites

St. Peters Billabong

St. Peters Billabong had a low survival rate of mistletoes on *Acacia melanoxylon* and *A. retinodes*, however the surviving plants are growing well (Fig 4-5). Four mistletoe plants are present at this site on both *Acacia* species. The survey failed to find evidence of the butterfly. This site has a low number of mistletoes and would benefit from additional seeding to enhance the habitat further.

Figure 4. Banded *Acacia retinodes.*

Figure 5. Banded *Acacia melanoxylon.*

Park 11

Park 11 (Mistletoe Park) supports a high survival rate of mistletoes on *Acacia acinacea* with all plants growing well (Fig 6-7). The survey failed to find evidence of the butterfly, however occupancy by cockroaches and geckos was observed under bands.

Figure 6. Banded *Acacia acinacea.*

Figure 7. Banded *Acacia acinacea.*

Park 27

Park 27 (Bonython Park) had a high survival rate of mistletoes on *Acacia acinacea* with all plants growing extremely well (Fig 8-9). The survey failed to find evidence of the butterfly, however occupancy by cockroaches and ants was observed under bands. The large number of suitable mistletoes will allow for the butterfly to establish a permanent population one this site is found.

Figure 8. Banded *Acacia acinacea.*

Figure 9. Banded *Acacia acinacea.*

Park 23

Park 23 (G.S. Kingston Park) had a very low survival rate of mistletoes on *Acacia melanoxylon* and no survival on *A. retinodes* and *A. iteaphylla*, however *A. victoriae* seeding was successful with plants growing extremely well (Fig 10). The survey found evidence of the butterfly with an empty pupae present under the band on *A. victoriae* (Fig 11). This site has a low number of mistletoes and would benefit from additional seeding due to the presence of the butterfly.

Figure 10. Banded *Acacia victoriae.*

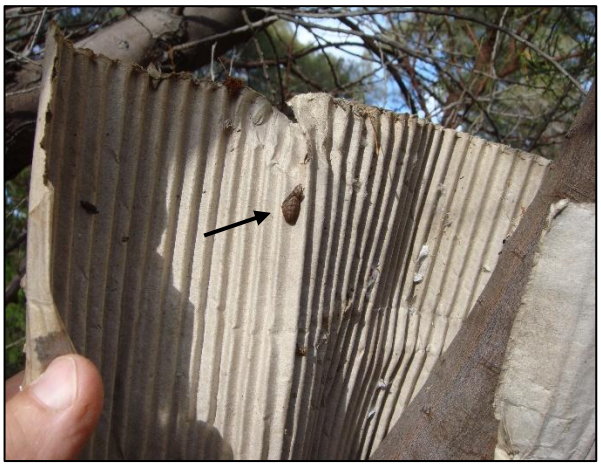

Figure 11. *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* exuvia.

Brownhill Creek

Brownhill Creek had a very high survival rate of mistletoes on *Acacia melanoxylon* and no survival on *A. retinodes* with plants growing extremely well (Fig 12-13). The survey

failed to find evidence of the butterfly. Numerous bands contained cockroaches and ants making the use by the butterfly highly unlikely. This site supports a high number of mistletoes and is highly likely to be used by the butterfly once found. A translocation of larvae from other high populations such as Marino Conservation Park may be beneficial if natural colonisation of site does not occur.

Figure 12. *Amyema preissii* on *Acacia melanoxylon.*

Figure 13. Banded *Acacia melanoxylon.*

Marino Bike Path

This site located to the west of Marino Conservation Park (CP) had a good survival rate of mistletoes on *Acacia victoriae* with plants growing extremely well. The survey found evidence of the butterfly with mature larvae and pupae present under the bands (Fig 14-15). Marino CP is a known butterfly population site and due to the proximity, this result is not unexpected.

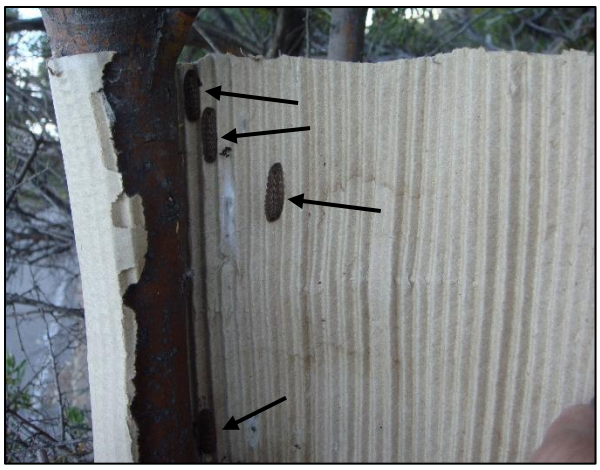

Figure 14. *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* larvae.

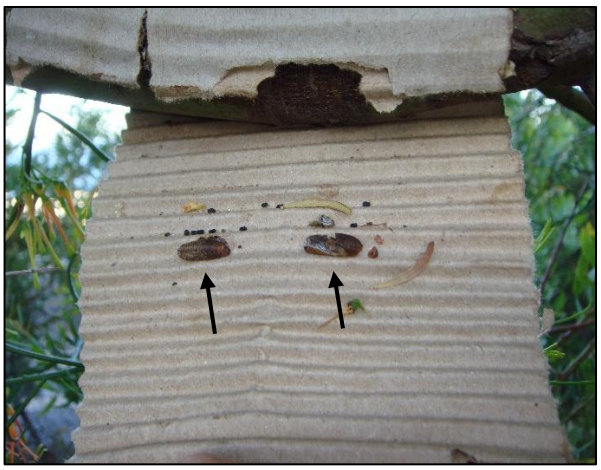

Figure 15. *Ogyris amaryllis meridionalis* pupae.

Hallett Cove Conservation Park

Hallett Cove CP had a very low survival rate of mistletoes on various *Acacia spp*. The successful uptake occurred on *A. victoriae* with the mistletoe plants growing extremely well (Fig 16). The survey did not find evidence of the butterfly, and this is not unexpected due to the low number of mistletoes present. This site would benefit from additional mistletoe seeding.

Figure 16. Banded *Acacia victoriae.*

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