Ento Search

Introduction Survey
of the Yellowish Sedge Skipper
(*Hesperilla flavescens*)

Windamere Park

Hesperilla flavescens, Photo credit: Matt Endacott

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Summary

The aim of the survey, undertaken on the 13th January 2026, was to determine the success of larval host plant acceptance post translocation of the Yellowish Sedge Skipper (*Hesperilla flavescens*) at Windamere Park from Eyre Peninsula population.

The survey identified larval acceptance rates of 17% for releases conducted in July and August 2025, and 50% for those carried out in December 2025.

Furthermore, evidence of three juvenile shelters, one away from the release site, was observed indicating successful breeding from the initial larval releases, although very limited.

Introduction

Windamere Park at Buckland Park was identified as a suitable location for development of Yellowish Sedge Skipper (YSS) butterfly habitat in 2021 for introductions. Subsequently *Gahnia filum* (Thatching Grass) was planted as the initial larval host plant in 2021 and a

The initial larval collection of the (YSS) was undertaken in July 2025 and released onto *G. trifida* only. A supplementary "top up" of YSS larvae was undertaken in August 2025. A further 102 larvae were released at site in December 2025 onto *G. trifida* and *G. filum* to strengthen the population trial in 2022 of *G. trifida* (Cutting Grass).

Evaluations of plant performance demonstrated that *G. filum* encountered difficulties adapting to the site's soil composition, freshwater conditions, and alternating wet and dry cycles. After further consideration a decision was made to introduce a secondary larval host plant *G. trifida* (Cutting Grass) at the site.

Plantings of both *Gahnia* species were undertaken in 2023, 2024 and 2025. *G. trifida* was planted in the wetter freshwater sections while *G. filum* in adjacent semi saline areas of this artificial wetland (Fig. 1). This decision has seen a rapid habitat development of the YSS with early *G. filum* and *G. trifida* plantings attaining suitability for use by the butterfly (Fig. 2-3).

Figure 1. Habitat area in green outline and release area in red.

Figure 2. Habitat and release area.

Figure 3. Habitat and release area.

Methodology

The survey to assess the current butterfly population involved systematic manual searches of all suitable larval host plants at site.

Larval shelters found were carefully opened and examined for contents with determinations made (Fig. 4-5).

Figure 4. Active shelters, *Gahnia trifida*.

Figure 5. Active shelter, *Gahnia filum*.

Results

The initial larval releases consisted of 98 larvae in July, with the subsequent release of 86 larvae in August seeing a poor uptake of larvae with only 32 active shelters found in October 2025. This result is disappointing; however, the long dry conditions of the 2024/2025 summer and autumn impacted the quality of larval host plants at the donour site (Hillsea Station). Larvae were found displaying a degree of aestivation and this no doubt contributed to poor shelter development post releases during July and August.

The surviving larvae were found to have successfully pupated with adult emergences noted. No parasitic activity of the pupae was found.

A further 102 larvae were released at site in December 2025 onto *G. trifida* and *G. filum* to increase the population and subsequently 51 mature shelters were found during this survey, an improvement on the initial releases.

A further two juvenile shelters were also found on *G. trifida* within the release areas and a one on *G. filum* away from the release site indicating successful breeding from the initial larval releases, although very limited (Fig 1).

Recommendations

It is recommended that plantings of both *G. filum* and *G. trifida* continue to develop the site in suitable areas.

In addition, assess population establishment in June by surveying active larval shelters; and if needed, consider further larval translocation.