

GENERAL NOTES

HOST RECORDS FOR *PARATRYTONE MELANE* (EDWARDS) (HESPERIIDAE)

Paratrytone melane (Edwards) is one of several species of HesperIIDae that has become increasingly urbanized throughout southern California. According to Thorne (1963, J. Res. Lepid. 2(2):148-149), *P. melane* was not recorded from San Diego County prior to 1941. In that year, it was first encountered near El Cajon and has since become one of our most common urban skippers. In San Diego County, *P. melane* is generally the first skipper on the wing in our residential areas, appearing as early as February. Capture records do not indicate a clear broodedness, but rather several or continuous over-lapping generations each year, with spring, mid-summer, and fall peaks.

In mid-March 1982, a female *P. melane* was observed ovipositing, in what seemed to be an indiscriminate manner, on several species of grass, both weedy and lawn, in southern San Diego city. A single larva was subsequently reared from an egg deposited on goldentop, *Lamarkia aurea* Linnaeus (Moench) (Poaceae), a common weedy introduced species. Development was normal, and the adult emerged following a three week pupal period. "Indiscriminate" oviposition was also observed by Comstock and Dammers (1931, Bull. So. Calif. Acad. Sci. 30(1):20-22), but the behavior was that of confined females.

A last instar larva of *P. melane* was collected and subsequently reared on Saint Augustine grass, *Stenotaphrum secundatum* Kuntze (Poaceae), from a lawn in Encinitas, California (David Faulkner, San Diego Natural History Museum). Noel MacFarland (pers. comm.) also reported rearing *P. melane* on *S. secundatum* from the lawn at his previous residence in the Santa Monica Mountains, Los Angeles County.

Larvae of *P. melane* are known to feed on Bermuda grass, *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Persoon (Poaceae), in the laboratory (Comstock & Dammers, op. cit.), and observations by William McGuire (pers. comm.) of oviposition by *P. melane* on *C. dactylon* in residential Del Mar, California, suggests its widespread use as a larval host in urban areas.

Native hosts of *P. melane* are poorly known; the single report of oviposition on *Deschampsia caespitosa* (L.) Beauvois (Poaceae) (Emmel & Emmel, 1973, Nat. Hist. Mus. Los Angeles Co., Sci. Ser. 26:80) is the only record of which I am aware. On one occasion the author collected a single last instar larva of *P. melane* on *Carex spissa* Bailey (Cyperaceae). Subsequently, Guy Bruyey of Poway, California, also collected and reared a single *P. melane* larva on *C. spissa*. This native sedge occurs in moist areas generally away from the coast and is probably widely used by *P. melane* in these habitats.

The presently documented larval hosts of *P. melane* are restricted to two monocot families: Poaceae and Cyperaceae. Several species of grass, both native and introduced, are utilized as hostplants or as oviposition substrates. The single known cyperaceous host, *C. spissa*, has exceedingly coarse leaf blades and in this respect seems to indicate that a wide range of leaf textures is tolerated by the larvae of *P. melane*. The ability of *P. melane* to utilize a large number of introduced species has given it the capacity to greatly expand its range throughout the urban areas of southern California.

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