D'Estrees
ENTOMOLOGY
Science Services

Lost *Ogyris* butterfly rediscovered on Kangaroo Island

The last time the endangered lycaenid butterfly *Ogyris halmaturia* (Tepper) (eastern large bronze azure) was recorded on Kangaroo Island (KI) was 1934. However, after 15 years of searching, D'Estrees Ento founder Dr Richard Glatz joined with colleagues Andy Young and Colin Wilson on an expedition that successfully located an extant population in the Flinders Chase National Park (see photograph). Since 1951, this species was thought extinct from mainland South Australia and Victoria, until the mid-late1990's when colonies were discovered at Ngarkat Conservation Park and the southern Eyre Peninsula. However, several attempts to locate it on KI had failed despite most of the pre-1990's specimens originating from there.

In 2013, Colin Wilson photographed a mating pair of butterflies and sought an identification from Richard and Andy, who were confident that the photograph did indeed show *O. halmaturia*. This provided the vital clue that led to the recent confirmation. Six individuals were captured and a short scientific paper on the topic is now being prepared.

The biology of this butterfly is curious and highly specialised, with caterpillars living their entire life in the ant's nest and never inhabiting plants. The female adult butterflies lay eggs at the nest entrances of the sugar ant, *Campontus terebrans* (Formicinae), and the ants transport the eggs deep into the nest. The resultant caterpillars are thought to consume ant larvae/pupae, obtain food directly from ants and/or feed on other ant- or plant root-associated taxa, such as coccoids. The butterfly larvae pupate in the ant nests and emerge in spring; adults are present only for about 3 weeks each season.

Andy Young holds the first female *Ogyris halmaturia* captured on Kangaroo Island for 80 years, as D'Estrees Ento founder Dr Richard Glatz looks on. Photograph: Colin Wilson