

Media Release

Tuesday, 27 September 2011

A Green Jewel calls Redlands home once again.

The recent sighting of the magnificent **Richmond Birdwing butterfly** in suburban Thornlands (Redlands) is fantastic news and potentially signifies that this butterfly once again is calling the Redlands home.

The identification has been confirmed by Dr. Ian Gynther of the Threatened Species Partnerships - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, DERM.

The Richmond Birdwing, *Ornithoptera richmondia* has become extinct from two-thirds of its original range and continues to contract. <http://www.richmondbirdwing.org.au/rbrnaims.php>

The Richmond Birdwing butterfly was destined to become extinct until a mighty effort was put in by organizations such as the Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network (RBCN) – a project of Wildlife Queensland and

Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and sympathetic residents who undertook a major planting of their larval host plant, the *Pararistolochia praevenosa* vine, across South East Queensland

Mr. Baltais from Wildlife Queensland said "It seems this major planting exercise put in by concerned residents and the education and recovery effort undertaken by RBCN and DERM has potentially turned the species trajectory away from extinction.

The exact location of the recent sighting is being kept confidential but it's clear that this very large and absolutely beautiful butterfly (14 - 16cm wingspan) can survive if suitable habitat is protected, even within suburbia".

Mr. Baltais said "The network is abuzz with this great news. This is not only one of Australia's most beautiful butterflies but it's up there with the world's best. To help save it from extinction is exciting stuff and just goes to show what a collaborative effort and a caring community can do".

Wildlife Queensland Bayside Branch and the Wildlife Queensland Research Group is now seeking feedback from Redland residents to determine if more have been sighted and if residents have planted the larval host plant the *Pararistolochia praevenosa* vine. This knowledge will help us understand the potential size of the Redlands population and its potential to expand. Both Wildlife groups can be contacted at bayside@wildlife.org.au

Mr. Baltais said 'Wildlife Queensland' has put a suggestion forward to DERM to establish a greater recovery effort in the Redlands to ensure the species has a secure future."

"We believe the butterfly has a good chance of flourishing given the Redland City Council and Redlands community are sympathetic to the environment and its wildlife" said Mr. Baltais.

Anyone interested to know more about the butterfly or wishing to join the **Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network** please visit their website at <http://www.richmondbirdwing.org.au/index.php>

For comments from RBCN please contact Chris Hosking, Chairperson, cimhosk1@bigpond.com

Simon Baltais
Wildlife Queensland



Photograph by Ian Gynther, DERM.

The Richmond Birdwing Butterfly (Ornithoptera richmondia) is one of the largest butterflies (female wingspan 14 – 16cm) found in South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. This beautiful butterfly, the male of which has brilliant green and black wings and bright red splash on its thorax, was once found in great numbers from the Mary River Heads in Queensland to the Clarence River in New South Wales and west to the Great Dividing Range.

Since the early 1900s, the range of the butterfly has become severely restricted. By the beginning of the 21st century, its distribution was reduced to two distinct populations, one on the Sunshine Coast and one stretching from the Gold Coast and its hinterland to the more northern parts of Northern New South Wales. Source: <http://www.richmondbirdwing.org.au/thebutterfly.php>