



One of the first shots I took with my 75-300mm telephoto, uncropped here (image is 3888 x 2592px) to show its benefits. The subject was a Common Eggfly, *Hypolimnas bolina*, two or three metres away in the middle of a patch of tall weeds; the 300mm end of the lens brought it nice and close and a shallow depth of field got rid of nearly all the clutter for a very pleasing result.

Photo Malcolm Tattersall

Life history notes on the Rock Ringlet, *Hypocysta euphemia* Westwood, 1851 Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae - Wesley Jenkinson



The Rock Ringlet is encountered from south-eastern Queensland southward to northern Victoria. Some of the most northern localities recorded in south-eastern Queensland include Flinders Peak (M. & D. Sands, 2003), Springbrook, and Mount Maroon in the Mount Barney National Park, where it is known from limited specimens. It then becomes locally common along the Granite Belt south of Stanthorpe into New South Wales. This species has a rather specialised habitat and appears to be restricted to higher altitudes throughout rocky

regions along the Great Dividing Range where it is locally common.



The adults of this species are slow fliers and they are typically found flying close to the ground near soft grasses in rocky areas and along steep cliff faces within open forest and woodland. Unlike the other species in the genus they prefer to settle on large rocks or rocky slabs in sunny areas. During hot conditions when settled the wings are angled to deflect the sun's rays as per the image on the previous page. The adults sometimes roost overnight in small aggregations in small sheltered caves created by overhanging rocks. Both sexes feed from a variety of small native and introduced flowers. While feeding at flowers the wings are momentarily opened and closed several times before moving to the next flower. Once disturbed they can fly quite rapidly and can be difficult to follow.

Whilst in flight, the adults can be confused with older worn specimens of the Orange Ringlet (*H. adiante*) and the Orange-streaked Ringlet (*H. irius*). In comparison to *H. adiante*, the adults are generally larger in physical size and *H. euphemia* also has two eye spots known as ocellus (plural of ocelli) on the upper side of the forewings. These are absent from all other species in the genus.

The sexes are quite similar in appearance. In comparison to the males, the females are brighter orange, the forewing is slightly broader with the termen more rounded (Braby, 2000).

The actual wingspan for the pictured males is 34mm and 36mm for the females



Hypocysta euphemia (Rock Ringlet)

Images left to right: male, female, male underside, female underside

On a recent trip during April 2012 to the Bolivia Hill/Deepwater region south of Tenterfield, a female was collected and kept in captivity. She laid two eggs and was then released. These eggs were kept for life history studies. Subsequently the larvae were successfully raised on the native grass Green Couch (*Cynodon dactylon*) with both of the adults emerging as large sized females. Like *H. irius* it appears that the native host grasses for this species so far are not recorded.



The eggs were smooth and cream coloured, slightly off spherical, approximately 0.8mm high x 0.8mm wide.

Freshly laid egg of *H. irius*





1st instar larva



2nd instar larva



Final instar head capsule



3rd instar



4th instar

The first instars emerged early in the morning and their eggshells were consumed shortly afterwards. The two larvae were observed feeding solitarily during daylight hours and resting on either side of the leaves of the utilised host plant. Typically, like other species in the genus, they were very slow moving and fed from the outer edge of the leaf. Both of the larvae raised completed four instars (similar to *H. metirius*, *H. irius*, *H. pseudirius* and *H. adiante*). The final instars attained a length of 26mm and both emerged as females.

The pupae were attached by silk to grass stems, hanging by the cremaster with the head suspended down. They were light grey in colour with a length of 13mm.



Pupa lateral, dorsal and ventral view

The total time from egg to adult was about two months, with egg duration of 7 days, larval duration 37 days and pupal duration of 21 days.

Within the boundary of the new Scenic Rim Regional Shire, south of Brisbane, I have adult records for the months of October and March from Mount Maroon within Mount Barney National Park. These records probably indicate there are two generations annually in this region.

Reference:

Braby, M.F., 2000. Butterflies of Australia – Their Identification, Biology and Distribution. vol 2. CSIRO Publishing.
 Sands, M. & D., 2003. New Butterfly Records, *News Bulletin, Entomological Society of Queensland Inc.* Vol 31, Issue3

Photos Wesley Jenkinson

