Some variability in *Papilio fuscus capaneus* Westwood, 1843 (Lepidoptera: Papilionidae: Papilioninae) from Brisbane

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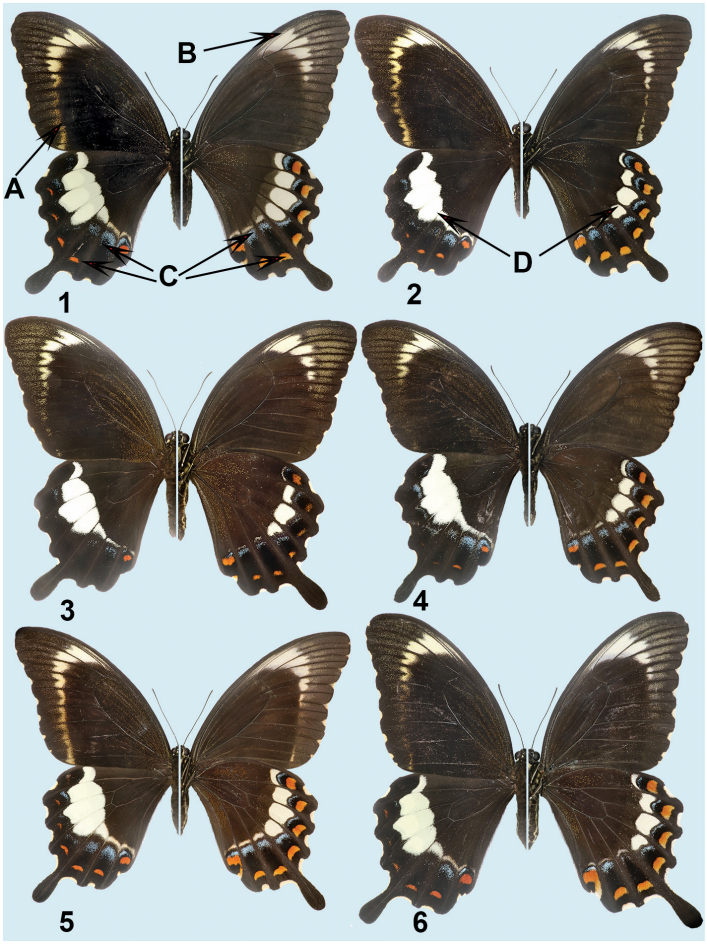
Papilio fuscus capaneus Westwood, 1843, the Fuscous Swallowtail butterfly is a large showy species that is a common visitor to Brisbane gardens as its larvae feed on the fresh growth of cultivated citrus plants. In some years it is considered a rarity, but this summer in Brisbane it has been abundant due to the very good wet season experienced in southeastern Queensland. Thus, at my home in Taringa, Brisbane, *P. f. capaneus* butterflies have been regularly visiting my potted citrus trees. In fact, this summer, there has been no time that larvae have not been present on the plants.

The butterfly is predominantly an east coast species, occurring from Cape York Peninsula, across to the west coast of the peninsula, and down the east coast to northern New South Wales (Braby 2016). It naturally occurs in dry vine thicket and monsoon forests, but the butterfly does venture into suburbia. Sankowsky (2020) lists and illustrates several native hostplants that are found in these scrubs. This species is well known for its ability to enter pupal diapause which can often last for over 12 months and sometimes more than three years.

Due to variability in markings of the butterflies in the tropics, Braby (2000) commented that individuals from Cape York were variable in their markings and were thus difficult to distinguish from individuals of *P. f. indicatus* Butler, 1876 from further north in Torres Strait. Having so many *P. f. capaneus* breeding in my garden this year has allowed me to collect a range of specimens and compare them to determine the variability within individuals in this part of the world, reared from the same plants over the same summer of 2021/2022. Therefore, illustrated here are six of these specimens reared from Brisbane, to illustrate the variability of markings that exist in both sexes from one location; predominantly, the extent and colour of the subterminal band of the forewing upper (A), the size of the white bars in the subapical area of the forewing upper and under (B), the frequency and size of the red and blue spots on the hindwings, upper and under (C), and the size of the hindwing white or cream postmedian patch upper and under (D).

The variability recorded in this species certainly adds to the beauty of the Fuscous Swallowtail and warrants it as a much-desired visitor to the residential block. Hopefully, the next summer will be another wet summer so we can continue seeing these beautiful butterflies in our suburban gardens.



Figs 1–6. *Papilio fuscus capaneus* reared at Taringa, Brisbane: (1) ♂ emerged 10.i.2022, (2) ♂ emerged 15.i.2022, (3) ♂ emerged 17.i.2022, (4) ♂ emerged 7.i.2022, (5) ♀ emerged 17.i.2022, (6) ♀ emerged 17.i.2022

References

Braby, M. F. 2000. *Butterflies of Australia: their identification, biology and distribution*. Pp. xx + 976. CSIRO Publishing: Collingwood.

Braby, M. F. 2016. *The complete field guide to butterflies of Australia.* Second Edition. 384 pp. CSIRO Publishing: Clayton South.

Sankowsky, G. 2020. *A field guide to the butterflies of Australia*. 400 pp. Reed New Holland Publishers: Sydney, Auckland.