

Have you seen one?

If you see an Australian fritillary make careful observations and try to photograph it. Note details of the exact location, take pictures of the site and immediately contact the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Upper side of the more frequently observed male Australian fritillary



Under side



Find out more

Office of Environment and Heritage

Ecosystems and Threatened Species Unit,
Coffs Harbour:
(02) 6659 8252

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/
ThreatenedSpeciesApp/profile.
aspx?id=10064](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/ThreatenedSpeciesApp/profile.aspx?id=10064)

Saving our Species website:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sos

Photos

Cover: © L Matthews (female upper side)

Page 2, 3 and 4: © G Sankowsky

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Published by Office of Environment and Heritage with
the Lepidoptera Conservation Group of
North East NSW.

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ISBN 978-1-76039-020-4 OEH2017/0421
August 2017

Printed using environmentally sustainable practices

saving
our
species

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Where has the Australian fritillary gone?



Australian fritillary

Argynnis hyperbius inconstans

Endangered

The Australian fritillary butterfly once occurred in coastal regions of south-east Queensland and north-east New South Wales. However, there have not been any verified sightings since 2001. Continued unverified reports of the butterfly sustain the hope that wild populations still exist, despite the widespread alteration and development of its coastal habitat.

Under the NSW Government's Saving our Species program, the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Lepidoptera Conservation Group of North East NSW are trying to locate this butterfly.



A partial view of the pinkish underside of the forewing

Identification

The Australian fritillary is a distinctive butterfly with a 6cm wingspan. The upper sides of the wings are orange-brown with characteristic black markings and a laced appearance to the margins. The underside of the forewing is pinkish, and the hindwing a chequered pattern of orange and white.



The caterpillar of the Australian fritillary

The caterpillar and its food plant

The female butterfly lays its eggs on or near the arrowhead violet (*Viola betonicifolia*), which is a small perennial herb. The caterpillar is thought to feed exclusively on the violet.

The leaves are 1-6cm long, 5-25mm wide, and have a very distinctive arrowhead shape. The violet favours moist locations including swampy areas and drainage lines (even artificial drains in cleared areas) and often grows unobtrusively beneath taller ground plants.



The arrowhead violet is easiest to find in spring when it is flowering

Where to look

The Australian fritillary is known from the coastal strip between Gympie in Queensland and Port Macquarie in New South Wales, although it may potentially occur beyond this area.

Australian fritillaries have been recorded in all months of the year, with male butterflies observed more often than females. They fly in sunny weather, usually in open areas near patches of violets.



Two Australian fritillary butterflies perched on the distinctive leaves of the arrowhead violet