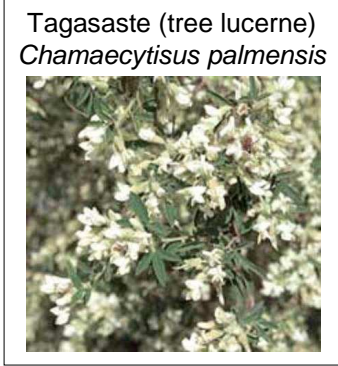




# The Atlas of Living Australia

**Understanding Biodiversity**

# Biodiversity information



Parasitises

Preys upon

Feeds upon

*Uresiphita ornithopteralis* (Guenée, 1854)

= *Mecyna ornithopteralis* Guenée, 1854

English: tree lucerne moth

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Arthropoda  
Class: Insecta  
Order: Lepidoptera  
Family: Crambidae  
Subfamily: Pyraustinae  
Tribe: Pyraustini  
Genus: *Uresiphita* Hübner, 1825

Identified as

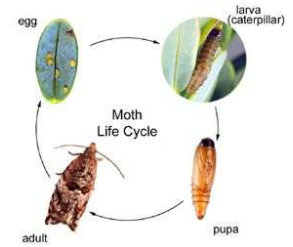
Molecular biology

Locality: Reid, ACT  
GPS: 35.280S 149.138E  
Date: 1 January 2008

Distribution

Biology and ecology

Fact sheets



**PestWeb**  
**Crop Insects**

**NEW SEARCH**

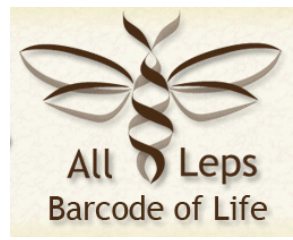
**Tree lucerne moth**  
*Uresiphita ornithopteralis*

**Description**  
This species has a fringe of sparse hairs, and grows to 30 mm long. The head is pale brown through to a shiny light brown, and thorax is black, later with brown white streaks. The body is light green with a yellow and white line just above the legs on each side. Above this there is a pale band made up of black blotches on each segment. Each leg is dark, with long hairs arising from it, and also has one or two white spots. Three pairs of dark legs at the base are followed by four pairs of green 'feet'. They are similar in length to the other legs but are thicker, and they are especially visible. The moth has a distinct 'head' at rest with wings folded. It is about 20 mm long, and 30 mm across, with its wings spread. The fore wings are dark grey-brown with a white line towards the fore edge. On the hind wings there are light brown bands where the wing scales have been rubbed off. The hind wings are orange-brown with a broad dark brown margin. The underbody is mostly white, with a white face and coiled feeding tube. Moths have been caught in light traps from early spring to late autumn.

**Life cycle**  
Details are uncertain, but it appears that moths are active throughout the year, with most activity in the warmer months. Eggs are laid on the tips of twigs, and the young caterpillars are somewhat gregarious. They pupate after three to five weeks, and emerge as moths four to eight weeks later.

**Damage**  
Caterpillars of the tree lucerne moth can completely defoliate tagasaste (tree lucerne), perennial lucerne, and some native leguminous shrubs such as honey locust, honey and wattle branches are webbed together, with caterpillars congregating in the webbing, and with dark spots of frass (caterpillar droppings) caught up in the webbing. Defoliated shrubs are unlikely to be killed, but plants less than a year old may be at risk. The insect is not currently reported, probably because, until recently, most tagasaste has entered Australia as cuttings of plants in arm loads. Increased farm plantings for fodder or soil conservation will provide more extensive opportunities for tree lucerne moth. Last of year production may be significant, and will depend on how tagasaste is used on farms.

**Control**  
There are no registered insecticides, but chemical control can be effective. Harvesting or grazing sheep when caterpillars are small may be the best control. Control methods to prevent defoliation in young plants will have to be determined in trials.



ALA

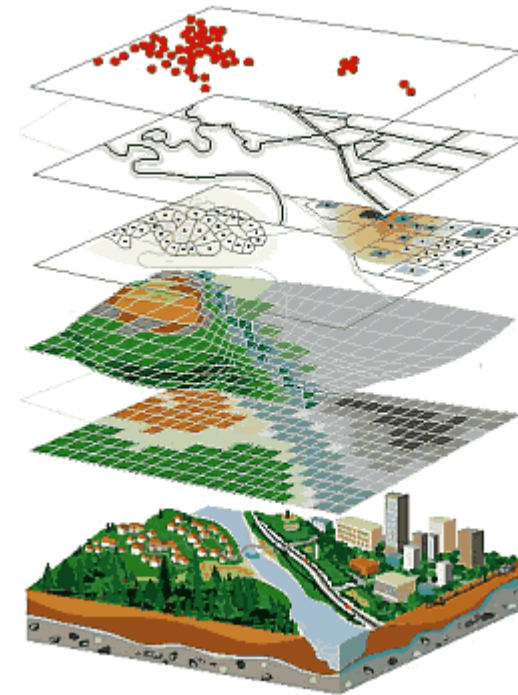
# Uses: Biosecurity

- Questions
  - What is this organism?
  - What does it eat?
  - Does it carry disease?
  - Could it spread in Australia?
  - How can it be controlled?
- Information needed
  - Names and classification
  - Identification keys
  - Images
  - Distribution data
  - Food webs
  - Literature (biology and control)



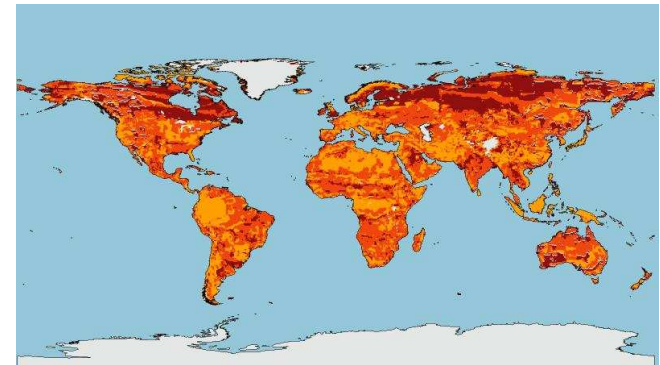
# Uses: Land-use planning

- Questions
  - What species are found here?
  - Are they threatened?
  - What are their needs?
  - How can impacts be minimised?
  - How can habitats be restored?
- Information needed
  - Names and classification
  - Distribution data
  - Food webs
  - Literature (biology and control)



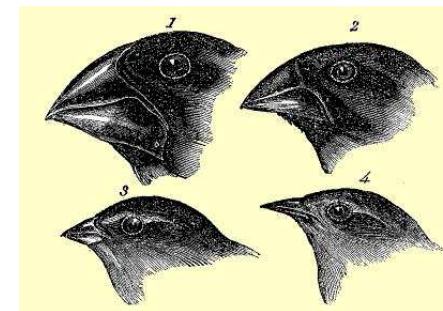
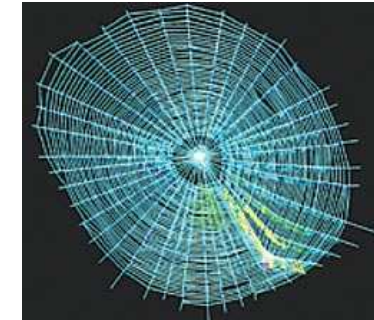
# Uses: Conservation and climate change

- Questions
  - Which species will be affected?
  - How will their ranges be affected?
  - Can they colonise more favourable regions?
  - Will pest species benefit?
- Information needed
  - Names and classification
  - Climate change models
  - Distribution data
  - Environmental niche models
  - Food webs
  - Literature (conservation and biology)



# Other uses

- Crop improvement
- Sustainable use
- Health and medicine
- Biomaterials
- Forensics
- Taxonomy

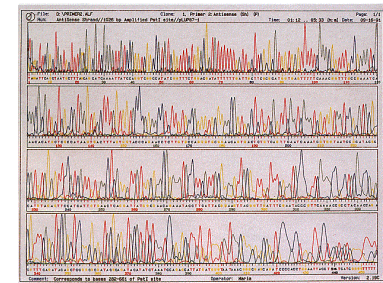
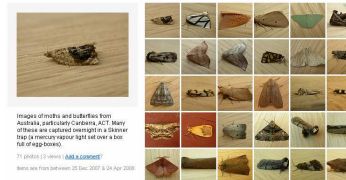


# Sources of biodiversity information

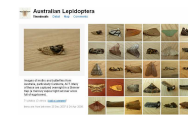
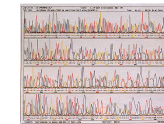
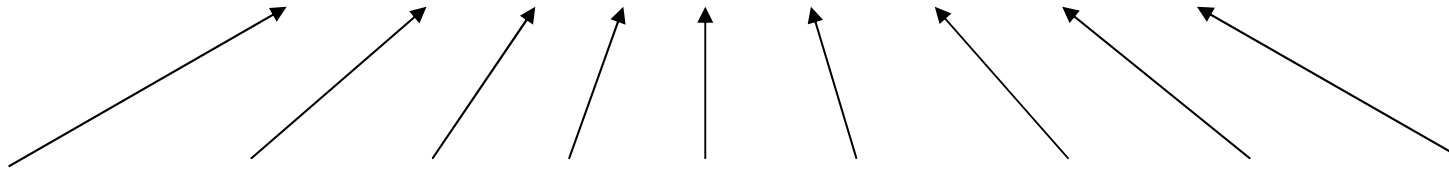
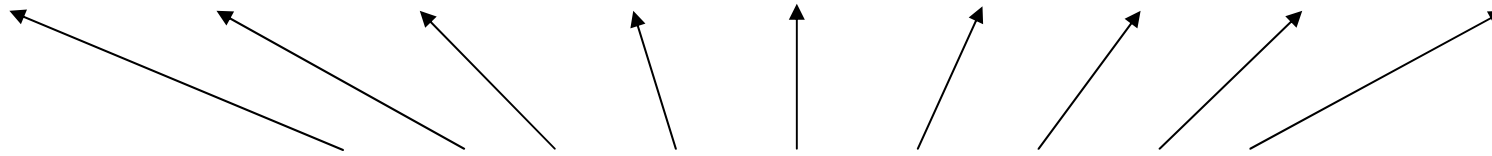
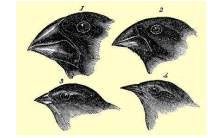
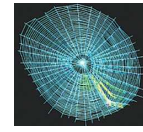
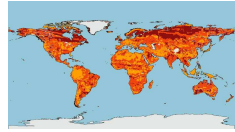
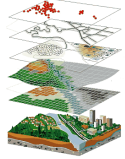
- Natural history collections and herbaria
- Living collections
- Field studies
- Literature
- Molecular research
- Images and multimedia
- Experts



Australian Lepidoptera



# Making information available to users



ALA



# Atlas of Living Australia

- Government-funded (NCRIS) project to June 2011
- Mission:
  - To develop an authoritative, freely accessible, distributed and federated biodiversity data management system
  - To share biodiversity knowledge to shape our future
- Participants
  - CSIRO
  - The Australian Museum
  - Museum Victoria
  - Queensland Museum
  - The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
  - Southern Cross University
  - The University of Adelaide
  - DAFF
  - DEWHA
  - CHAH
  - CHAFC
  - CHAEC
  - AMRRN

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Thank you

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