

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Antipodia chaostola subsp. leucophaea Chaostola Skipper

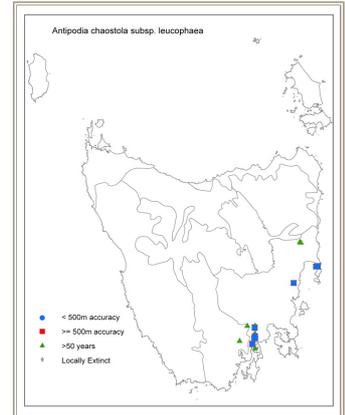
Group: Arthropoda, Insecta (insects), Lepidoptera (butterflies, moths), Hesperiiidae (Skippers)

Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995:* **endangered**
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: **Endangered**

Endemic Status: Found only in Tasmania



The Chaostola Skipper (*Antipodia chaostola subsp. leucophaea*) is a medium-sized (32-35 mm), brown and yellow coloured butterfly. The Chaostola Skipper, in contrast to other skippers in Tasmania, has the entrance of the larval shelter located at the bottom with the larva resting head downwards. It is restricted to dry forest and woodland supporting sedges of the *Gahnia* genus, and occurs in isolated populations in south-eastern and eastern Tasmania. The adults fly between October and December. Adults are rarely seen, but larval colonies can be detected by searching for the distinctive larval shelters. The species is threatened by any activity which removes or degrades its *Gahnia* habitat, including subdivisions, too frequent burning and forestry. The main objectives for management of this species are to protect all known colonies and to locate any new colonies that might exist.



Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

Habitat

- 'Habitat' refers to both known habitat for the species (i.e. in or near habitat where the species has been recorded) and potential habitat (i.e. areas of habitat with appropriate characteristics for the species and within the species potential range which have not yet been adequately surveyed).
- If in doubt about whether a site represents potential habitat for this species, contact the Threatened Species Section for further advice.
- The known range of the Chaostola Skipper includes five "colonies" (records) in the east and southeast in mainly near-coastal lowlands. There are also some historical records, and possibly of only adults, in the north and south of the state. The potential range of the Chaostola Skipper includes any area of habitat within the range of the food species *Gahnia radula* and *G. microstachya* (i.e. coastal northern and eastern Tasmania).
- Habitat for the Chaostola Skipper corresponds to a number of vegetation types in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit, including: 'Grassy/heathy woodland and forest', 'Heathy woodland and forest', 'Shrubby forest' (see Eucalypt bush for more information on managing these vegetation types), and 'Dry coastal vegetation' and 'Heath' (see Other bush types for more information on managing these vegetation types).
- Habitat characteristics for the Chaostola Skipper includes the following elements: dry lowland vegetation supporting the food plants *Gahnia radula* and/or *G. microstachya*, on relatively infertile substrates derived from sandstones, mudstones, siltstones, granites or windblown sands; the Coningham, Knocklofty and Peter Murrell Reserve colonies occur in a mosaic of heathland, heathy woodland and dry *Eucalyptus amygdalina* and *E. tenuiramis* forests on sandstone; the Little Swanport colony occurs in dry sedgy/grassy woodland and forest dominated by *Acacia mearnsii*, and *Eucalyptus globulus* forest on sandstone and dolerite slopes.

What to avoid

- Clearing of habitat for urban development, agriculture and forestry
- Too-frequent burning of *Gahnia* habitat

Surveying

Key	Survey reliability more info
M	Peak survey period
M	Potential survey period
M	Non-survey period

To ensure you follow the law - check whether your survey requires a permit. Always report any new records to the Natural Values Atlas, or send the information direct to the Threatened Species Section. Refer to the Activity Advice: Surveying page for background information.

Species	Spring						Summer						Autumn						Winter					
Chaostola Skipper (adults)	S	S	O	O	N	N	D	D	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A

Species	Spring						Summer						Autumn						Winter					
Chaostola Skipper (larval shelters)	S	S	O	O	N	N	D	D	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A

- Adults of the Chaostola Skipper can be surveyed during the species' flight period (October to December) on warm sunny days with little or no wind.
- Surveys for the distinctive larval shelter of this species can be carried out at any time of the year due to the long duration of the larval stage (up to 20 months). Detection of the distinctive larval shelters is a relatively simple exercise in close-to-the-ground hand searching of clumps of *Gahnia*.

Helping the species

- In order to recognise the species' habitat if it occurs on your property, learn to identify the two food plants of the Chaostola Skipper (*G. radula* and *G. microstachya*). If in doubt, seek expert assistance with identification.
- In order to recognise the species if it occurs on your property, learn to identify the adult Chaostola Skipper and the species' distinctive larval shelter. If in doubt, seek expert assistance with identification.
- If you live or work in the area where the species occurs (see distribution map, above), look out for and record any observations of the species. All records of this species can provide important information on distribution and abundance.
- If you are interested in knowing for certain whether the species occurs on your land, organise a formal survey. You may need to employ an ecological consultant to do this. Your local Bushcare or Field Naturalist club may be able to assist you with a survey.
- Important! Always report any observations of the species to the NRE Natural Values Atlas, or else provide the data direct to the Threatened Species Section. Records stored on the NVA are a permanent record and are accessible to other people interested in this species.
- Consider the needs of the whole habitat. Preserving a threatened species' habitat is the best way to manage both the species and the environment in which it lives.
- Habitat for the Chaostola Skipper corresponds to a number of vegetation types in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit, including: 'Grassy/heathy woodland and forest', 'Heathy woodland and forest', 'Shrubby forest' (see [Eucalypt bush](#) for more information on managing these vegetation types), and 'Dry coastal vegetation' and 'Heath' (see [Other bush types](#) for more information on managing these vegetation types).
- For long-term protection of populations on private land – consider protection of habitat through a vegetation management agreement or conservation covenant.

Cutting or clearing trees or vegetation

- Urbanisation is the major cause of local extinctions of the Tasmanian Chaostola Skipper. Roadside and fenceline stands of *Gahnia radula* indicate that the plant was once more widely distributed in south-eastern Tasmania, and many of these areas are now largely subdivided into small residential blocks. Agricultural development has also contributed to a decline in the extent and quality of habitat.
- Note that understorey modification alone is sufficient to render habitat unsuitable for this species.
- To prevent loss of habitat and local extinction of colonies of the Chaostola Skipper - avoid clearing and/or fragmentation of remaining habitat.
- To prevent degradation of habitat - manage areas of remaining habitat to maintain healthy stands of the food plants *G. radula* and *G. microstachya*.

Burning

- The Chaostola Skipper is most abundant a few years following fire, and regrowth of *Gahnia* species is encouraged by fire. However, too frequent burning can remove both butterfly and food plant.
- In the absence of fire, scrub vegetation appears to displace open vegetation supporting *Gahnia microstachya* and *G. Radula*, as has occurred in Freycinet National Park and in Peter Murrell Reserve, respectively.
- To preserve habitat quality - conduct ecological and fuel reduction burns in areas of habitat at a suitable frequency to maintain open vegetation supporting *Gahnia microstachya* and *G. radula*.
- To allow for recolonisation of the Chaostola Skipper after burning - conduct ecological and fuel reduction burns in a mosaic to allow for the recolonisation from neighbouring areas.
- For more information on fire management of Chaostola Skipper habitat, contact the [Threatened Species Section](#).

Agriculture

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Subdivision

- Urbanisation is the major cause of local extinctions of the Chaostola Skipper. Roadside and fenceline stands of *Gahnia radula* indicate that the plant was once more widely distributed in south-eastern Tasmania, and many of these areas are now largely subdivided into small residential blocks.
- Note that understorey modification alone is sufficient to render habitat unsuitable for this species.
- To prevent loss of habitat and local extinction of colonies of the Chaostola Skipper - avoid clearing and/or fragmentation of remaining habitat.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

[Link to Australian Government's Conservation Advice](#)

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Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.