

Pieridae family

Caper White

*Belenois java teutonia***Abundance in Adelaide area:** Common**Flight:** Sep–May, but most common during Oct–Dec**Wingspan:** m 55 mm; f 55 mm**Mature larva length:** 34 mm

The Caper White is a migrant, sometimes seen in large numbers in Adelaide. In most years it arrives from central and eastern Australia in the period from October to December each year. Anyone who has the space to grow a Native Orange tree will be rewarded with a prolonged presence of these butterflies, as it will use it throughout its life cycle. The smaller Bush Caper may prove better for small gardens.

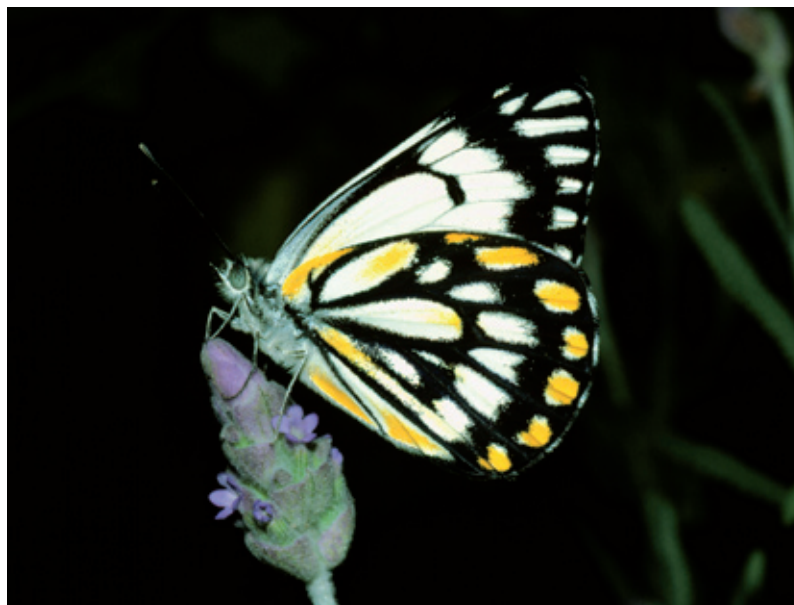
Caterpillar food plants: Native and introduced *Capparis* species. The caterpillars eat the soft green parts of these plants.

South Australian species: Native Orange or Tree Caper (*Capparis mitchellii*).

Foreign species: Bush Caper (*Capparis spinosa*).

Every few years, a huge migration of these butterflies will occur in late spring to early summer. Their breeding areas are distributed from the northern Flinders Ranges to western New South Wales, through western Queensland and along the Queensland coast.

When its populations suffer an explosion, the butterflies head off in a southerly migration, reaching the southern portions of South Australia and Victoria, with some stragglers reaching Tasmania on occasions. The butterflies then fly northward again, the total migration travelling several thousand kilometres.



The male and female butterflies have a white background to both surfaces on the wings. On the upper surface there is quite a degree of variability. Both sexes have black outer borders to the fore and hind wings. These can range from a relatively light border that only extends for about three quarters of the length of the wings, to thick black margins that can cover most of the wings in extreme examples. The underside of the forewing is similar to the upper side; however, there is extensive yellow suffusions where there is white in the upper surface.

The mature caterpillar is cylindrical, brown, with yellow spots and white hairs and has a black head.

The pupae are variable. Normally they are white with black markings; occasionally they may be all white, black or pale pink. The pupae are situated on the caterpillar food plant or on objects nearby.

