

**Nymphalidae family**

# Ringed Xenica

*Geitoneura acantha ocrea***Also known as:** Southern Ringed Xenica**Abundance in Adelaide area:** Uncommon**Flight:** Late Nov – late Mar**Wingspan:** m 39 mm; f 44 mm**Mature larva length:** 29 mm

The South Australian range of this delightful Brown is restricted to the moist, western side of the southern Mount Lofty Ranges. The Ringed Xenica prefers damp gullies where its caterpillar food plants—native and introduced grasses—remain green longer than elsewhere. If you live in the wetter region of the hills and provide a damp, sheltered niche where fine, soft grasses may grow, your garden might become a sanctuary for this local and uncommon species.

**Caterpillar food plants:** Native and introduced grasses. The caterpillars eat the leaves.

**Adelaide native species:** Meadow Rice-grass (*Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides*), Matted Tussock-grass (*Poa clelandii*), Slender Tussock-grass (*Poa tenera*).

**Foreign species:** Weed grasses — False Brome\*, Kikuyu\*, Veldt Grass\*.

This butterfly is only found in the cooler portions of the Mount Lofty Ranges. It is a very elegantly patterned butterfly, especially on its underside. It favours damp gullies and sheltered open woodlands where fine native grasses grow and stay in good condition for most of the year.

Both sexes are quite similar in appearance; the easiest way to separate them is the larger size of the female and the fine grey sex brand that runs diagonally across the forewing of the male.



This sex brand is a line of specialised scales. The background colour of the upper surface of the wings is a quite bright orange colour that has a slight brownish tone.

The underneath of the forewing looks like a pale version of the upper side; however, the underside of the hind wing is quite spectacular. It has a cream background, with intricate red-brown patterning and large eyespot at the central top and bottom of the wing.

The mature caterpillar is either brown or green, with darker and paler lines running the length of the body. The head is a similar colour to the body, but features a pair of blunt horns.

The pupa is green or pink-brown, with darker brown markings and yellow spots. It is suspended from the food plant.

