

Hesperiidae family

Southern Grass-dart

*Ocybadistes walkeri hypochlorus***Also known as:** Greenish Grass-dart**Abundance in Adelaide area:** Common**Flight:** Late Sep – early May**Wingspan:** m 20mm; f 20mm**Mature larva length:** 23mm

This colourful Skipper has adapted well to suburbia and is present throughout metropolitan Adelaide. It breeds on many native and introduced grasses that remain in a lush condition over summer. A sheltered garden corner where grass has been allowed to grow long suits it very well. Grow native grasses and don't be too zealous with the weeding.

Caterpillar food plants: Native and introduced grasses, and occasionally sedges. The caterpillars eat the leaves.

Adelaide native species: Grasses: Spear Grasses (*Austrostipa* spp.), Umbrella Grasses (*Enteropogon* spp.), Kunai Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and probably other grasses. Sedges: Stiff Flat-sedge (*Cyperus vaginatus*).

Foreign species: Weed grasses — Couch Grass*, False Brome*, Kikuyu*, Rice Millet*, Veldt Grass* and others.

One of two small Skippers known as Darts. Both species rest with the hind wings held on a horizontal plane, while the forewings are held in a vertical plane. This is a common butterfly of gardens and parks and the addition of a patch of tall native or introduced grass caterpillar food plants will favour this species.

Both sexes of this butterfly have a brown background to the upper surface of the wings, with orange markings. The female tends to be



a paler orange and has more rounded margins to its wings. The scale fringe along the outer margins of both wings is orange.

Underneath, both wings have a yellow or greenish-yellow background colour. The forewing has yellow-orange markings that mirror those on the upper surface. The central and bottom portion of this wing has a dark brown area, which the yellow-orange markings are displayed against. The markings of the hind wing are similar to those on the upper surface, with yellow-orange markings visible on the yellow to green-yellow background.

The mature caterpillar is slender, cylindrical and green in colour. It has a darker line down its back. The head is grey-white in colour with pale brown markings.

The pupa is pale brown or green-brown and is surrounded by white fluffy material inside the shelter.

