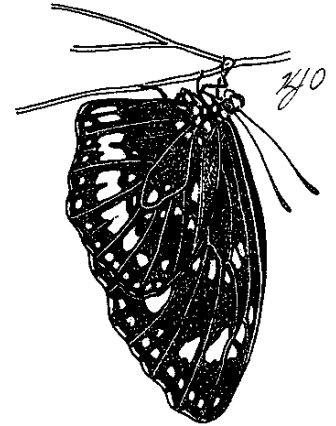


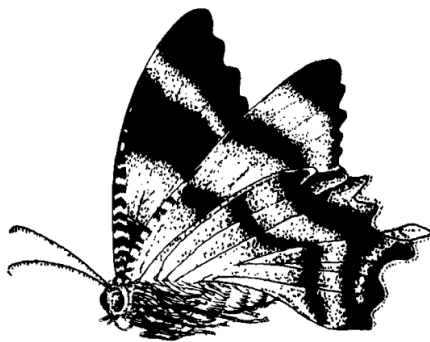
Tropical Factsheets

Butterfly and moth migrations

- During winter, a number of Wet Tropics butterflies move to the coast and to sheltered areas along creeks, where they congregate in huge clusters of up to thousands for about three months.
- **Blue Tigers** and **Common Australian Crows** (which are related to the Wanderers or Monarchs) are the most abundant. They may be accompanied by **Black and White Tigers** and **Eastern Brown Crows**. They hang from twigs and wait for temperatures to rise and for new leaves to appear on larval food plants.
- **Yellow and Lemon Migrants** also move in large numbers.
- Migrating adults generally **do not eat** because they build up sufficient fat reserves during their caterpillar stages.
- Their hormones are also switched off. This means that they do not mate and don't bother about being territorial. Because they are not aggressive during this migrating stage, many butterflies can live and fly closely together in harmony.
- If a butterfly is too cold to fly (20 deg. is about the limit) it flaps or vibrates its wings to warm up.
- **Overheating** can also be a problem for butterflies, particularly in the tropics. Many species fly or rest only in the shade, and when they land they hold their wings upright so that they partially shade their bodies.
- **Zodiac Moths** (day-flying moths) occur in large numbers in winter and cluster together at night. They probably head to the Bartle Frere/Johnstone River area to breed. The adults disperse in



Common Australian Crow



Zodiac Moth

summer, with large numbers occurring in December on the Atherton Tablelands.

- **Brown Awls** (a type of Skipper) migrate northwards in their thousands in late summer to spend the winter in north-east Queensland, and then move south in summer.

- The **Fivebar Swordtail Butterfly** which visits deciduous vine forests, flies only in summer. It rests in its pupa for the remainder of the year, and emerges in response to summer rain.