

Eurema albula (Ghost Yellow Butterfly)

Order: Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths)

Class: Insecta (Insects)

Phylum: Arthropoda (Arthropods)



Fig. 1. Ghost yellow, *Eurema albula*.

[http://butterfliesofamerica.com/images/Pieridae/Coliadinae/Eurema_a_albula/Eurema_albula_albula_F_TRINIDA_D_1901-MGCL-2.jpg, downloaded 26 October 2016]

TRAITS. *Eurema albula*, also known as *Terias albula* (previous scientific name) and the ghost yellow, is a small, mainly white butterfly of the tropics (Fig. 1). The underside of the wings has a pale yellow coloration (Godman and Salvin, 1979). The forewing has a rounded brown apex (tip), and the hind wing has a brown margin that is slightly thicker in females (Murillo-Ramos et al., 2016). Their wingspan is quite short, under 5cm (Butterflies and Moths of North America, 2016).

DISTRIBUTION. The butterflies are found between 0-1200m above sea level, in Central American countries like Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, and British Honduras (Godman and Salvin, 1979), also in Texas, Venezuela, southern Brazil and of course Trinidad (Fig. 2) (Chuah and Cushing, 1995). Among all of these locations there exists many variations or subspecies of *Eurema albula*, but this will not be discussed here. However, it must be noted that the Venezuela form is nearly identical to the natives found in Trinidad (Murillo-Ramos et al., 2016), which suggests that *Eurema albula* may be a migrant species in Trinidad.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. The *Eurema albula* butterfly is generally found in secondary vegetation and in light shade. It has also been reported that the males roam dense vegetation, usually well lit. The larva of the butterfly feeds on *Cassia* plants and the adults feed on the nectar of flowers (Butterflies and Moths of North America, 2016).

REPRODUCTION. The female lays her eggs on *Cassia* shrubs (Chuah and Cushing, 1995). *Eurema albula* has a typical life cycle where the egg hatches into a caterpillar. It then spends time in this form until it is ready to form a chrysalis. From there it undergoes further development to eventually emerge as an adult butterfly.

BEHAVIOUR. *Eurema albula* flies throughout the year (Butterflies and Moths of North America, 2016). It has been reported to fly 0.5m above the ground. Moreover, the butterfly seems to avoid deep shadow or intense light, preferring to fly during the day in low sunlight. The butterflies have been seen in small colonies, flying among other butterflies in bushes (personal observations).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. This species is only documented devouring the *Cassia* shrub. As a result, it can be assumed that it has no negative impact on human society or agriculture. It has an endangered species rating of G-5, meaning its population is stable worldwide (Butterflies and Moths of North America, 2016). The IUCN has no listing of this species; the genus contains a large number of diverse species, and there is a tendency of slight environmental pressures to form subspecies (Klots, 1928).

REFERENCES

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Posted online: 2016

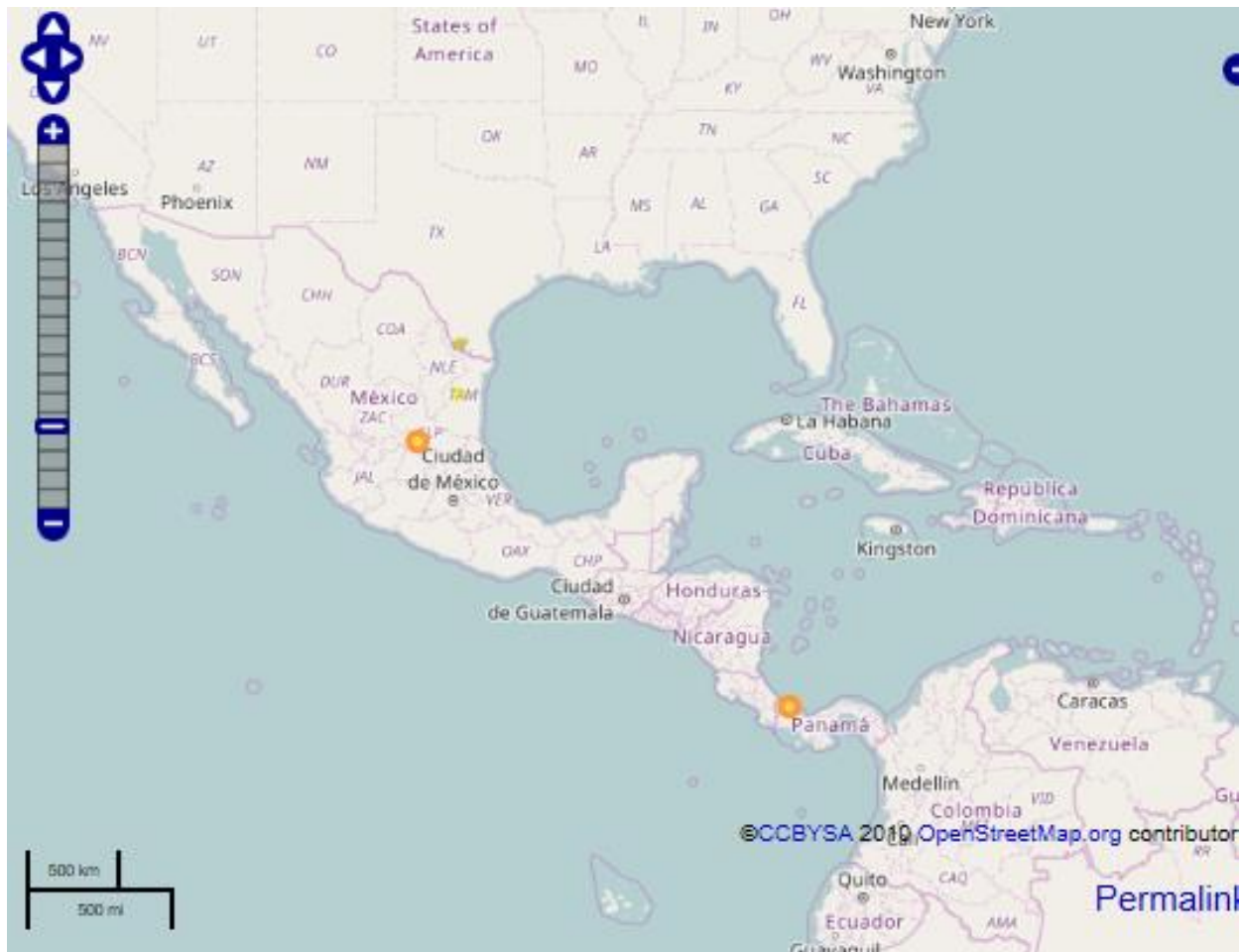


Fig. 2. Map of the distribution of *Eurema albula*.

[<http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Eurema-albula>, downloaded 26 October 2016]

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