

Hypanartia lethe (Orange Mapwing)

Order Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths)

Class Insecta (Insects)

Phylum Arthropoda (Arthropods)



Fig. 1. Orange Mapwing, *Hypanartia lethe*.

[<http://www.globaltwitcher.com/artspec.asp?thingid=73039> downloaded 22 September 2016]

TRAITS. The wing span of *Hypanartia lethe* ranges from approximately 40-50mm (Raguso, 2015). The body of the orange mapwing, also known as the orange admiral, is light brown in colour. The forewings are orange with brown apex and outer margin (Fig. 1). The hindwings are mostly orange with a few brown spots around the edges. The butterfly got the name orange mapwing because of the map-like pattern under its wings (Fig. 2). Male mapwings are brighter in colour than females, so that the male butterfly would be able to successfully attract the female for mating (Lotts et al., 2016).

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT. The orange mapwing is a widespread as well as a common species, found in Paraguay, Trinidad, Texas, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru and Mexico. These butterflies prefer mountainous, forested and riverside habitats. They can be commonly found in forested areas up to an altitude of 1270-1400m (Raguso, 2015)

REPRODUCTION AND LIFE CYCLE. The orange mapwing reproduces sexually. The female butterfly produces pheromones which are chemicals that are released by animals (mostly mammals and insects) into the environment; pheromones affect the behaviour of other animals of the same species. When the female orange mapwing releases these pheromones, male mapwings detect the chemical and would then attempt to mate with the female. Successful mating results in the two butterflies being joined for a short while by the abdomen, the male butterfly inserts sperm into the female to fertilize the eggs (Reference.com, 2016). There are four stages in the life cycle of the orange mapwing; egg, larva, pupa then adult.

The orange map-wing lays small white eggs; hundreds are laid one by one on leaves of the plants which the larva uses for food after hatching. These plants include Urticaceae (*Phenax* and *Boehmeria*) and Ulmaceae (*Celtis*) (Hoskins, 2016).

In the larval stage the orange mapwing is small and whitish/cream in colour, covered with short spines which they use for defence against predators. When the larva is resting (not feeding) it resides in a rolled cylindrical (tube-like) leaf structure that has a silky inner lining, known as a silk nest. The larva undergoes moulting as it grows.

In the pupal stage the orange mapwing has a greenish/cream coloured body which is covered in black spines (also used for defence against predators). The pupal stage is also known as the chrysalis (which is a casing the larva forms around itself) and this is the stage of the life cycle by which the larva transitions into an adult butterfly.

ADULT BEHAVIOUR. Whenever orange mapwings are resting their wings are held in an upright position. The butterflies of this species do not live in groups. *Hypanartia lethe* are attracted to mud, faeces and rotting fruit (Raguso, 2015). The butterflies fly at a height of approximately 2-4m off the ground, have a swift pattern of flight, and are very busy feeding and searching for a mate (Hoskins, 2016; Jasinski, 2016).

REFERENCES

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Fig. 2. *Hypanartia lethe* mounted specimen (underside).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypanartia_lethe 24/09/2016, downloaded 22 September 2016]

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