



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Banana skipper (181)



Photo 1. Damage done to banana by the caterpillar of the banana skipper, *Erionota thrax*.



Photo 2. Caterpillar of the banana skipper, *Erionota thrax*. Note the black head, narrow "neck" and the body that is pale green.



Photo 3. Rolled edges of banana leaf by the banana skipper, *Erionota thrax*



Photo 4. Pupa of the banana skipper, *Erionota thrax*.



Photo 5. Adult banana skippers, *Erionota thrax*. The female is on the left.



Photo 6. Adult banana skipper, *Erionota thrax*, with folded wings.

Summary

- Narrow distribution. South and Southeast Asia, Oceania. On banana, and *Musa* species, bamboo, coconut and other palms.
- Eggs on underside of the leaves; caterpillars pale green with shiny black heads; adults up to 8 cm, brown with three yellow dots on forewings.
- Damage to 60% leaf area recorded, and if it occurs at fruiting, bunch yields likely to be lower.
- Natural enemies: wasp parasitoid.
- Cultural control: handpick.
- Chemical control: PDPs - chillies, neem, pyrethrum, derris (plus soap); or, if grown for sale, spinosad, or Bt, on young caterpillars, to preserve the natural enemies.

Common Name

Banana skipper, banana leaf roller, hesperiid butterfly

Scientific Name

Erionota thrax; there are three subspecies: *Erionota thrax thrax* in Papua New Guinea, *Erionota thrax mindana* in the Philippines, and *Erionota thrax basdrubal* in the northern Moluccas - the Moluccas are islands between East Timor, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya.

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Photo 1 *Exotic pest alert: Banana skipper butterfly* (NSW Department of Primary Industries (2014) Primefact, Plant Biosecurity, Orange. Photos 2,5&6 Pest and Disease Image Library, Bugwood.org. Photos 3&4 Richard Markham, ACIAR, Canberra.

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