

MOTHS MATTER



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Why do #MothsMatter?



Many moths are very important pollinators - pollinating the flowers they visit when feeding on nectar.



Moths are an intrinsic and beautiful part of garden wildlife. In some parts of the UK you could see up to 400 different species on your plants and flowers.



Over 50 moth species have become extinct since the turn of the century.



Moths and their caterpillars play a vital role in the ecosystem.



“It is important that we engage and monitor moths because we know that many species are in critical decline. The lack of large moths and caterpillars in springtime is undoubtedly impacting negatively on our population of cuckoos and the wider ecosystem.”

Chris Packham,
Butterfly Conservation
Vice President



Kentish Glory

How vital are moths to the ecosystem?



Jersey Tiger

Essential

Moths occur throughout Britain and are found in all sorts of habitats, from coasts to mountains.

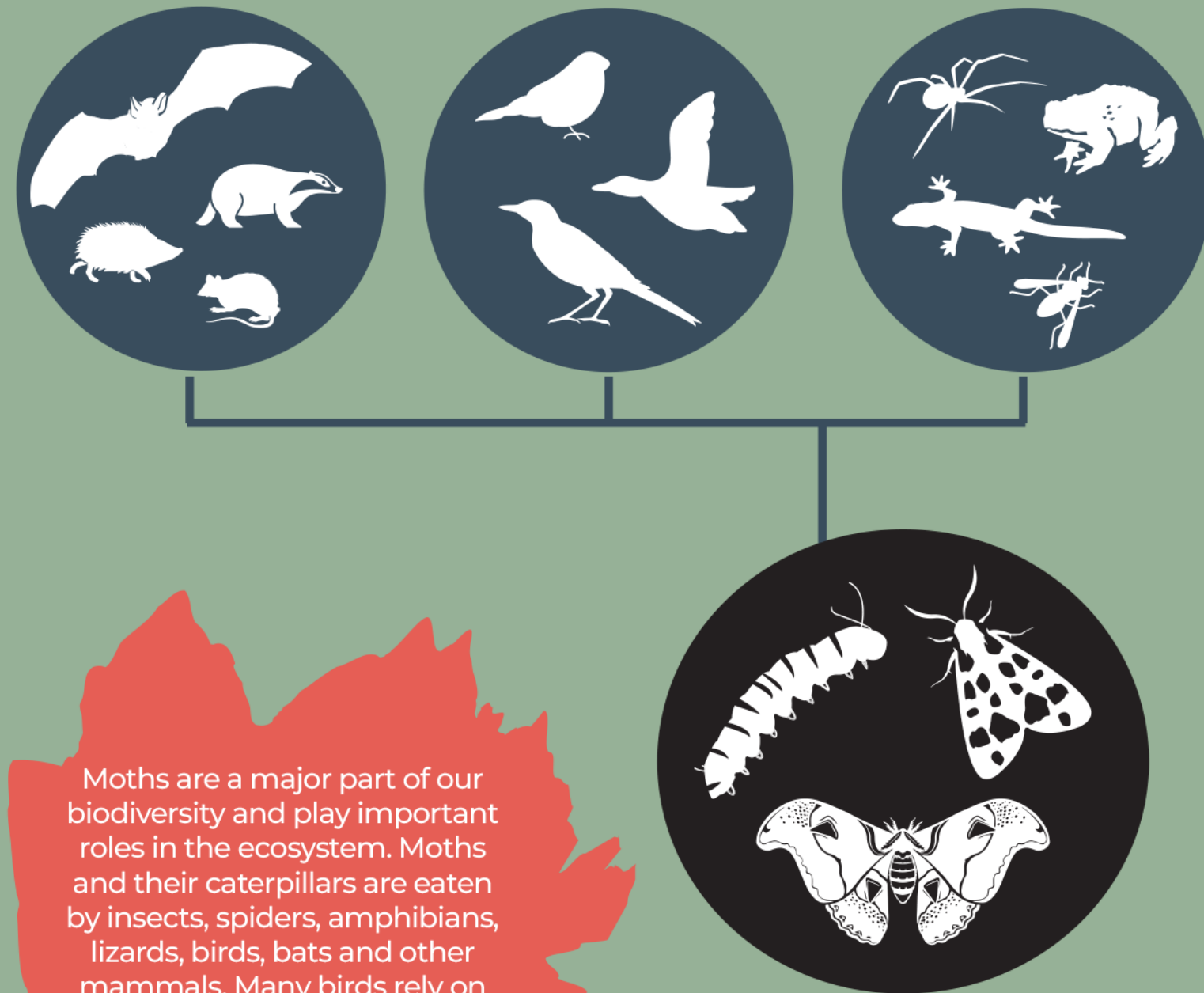
Moths and their caterpillars are important food items for many other species. Some of Britain's favourite garden birds rely on caterpillars to rear their young, with our Blue Tit chicks alone needing an estimated 35 billion a year! Many species of moth have declined dramatically in recent decades, and over 60 became extinct in the 20th century.

The alarming decrease in moth populations is not just bad news for the moths themselves, but also has disastrous knock-on effects for many other wildlife species. Research has already indicated that a decrease in the number of bats over farmland it related to a decline in the moths that they feed on.



Spotted Flycatcher with Swallow-tailed Moth

Butterflies and moths are important indicators of the health of the environment. Areas rich in butterflies and moths are rich in other invertebrates and they collectively provide a wide range of environmental benefits, including pollination and pest control.



Moths are a major part of our biodiversity and play important roles in the ecosystem. Moths and their caterpillars are eaten by insects, spiders, amphibians, lizards, birds, bats and other mammals. Many birds rely on caterpillars for food, especially for feeding their young.



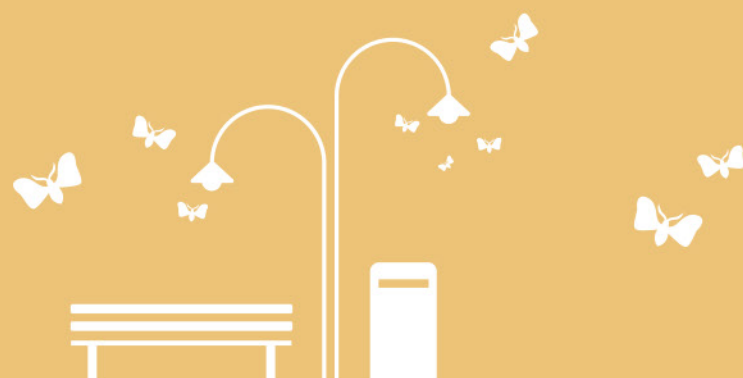
Like a moth to a flame



Fisher's Estuarine Moth

A new study has confirmed that streetlights drastically reduce moth populations

The loss of up to half of caterpillar abundance can be expected wherever new streetlights are installed



A groundbreaking study by Butterfly Conservation, the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, and Newcastle University has recently shown that streetlights in southern England reduce the number of moth caterpillars in hedgerows by almost half, and in grass verges by a third.

The research also found that the white LED streetlights that are rapidly replacing older sodium lamps (which produce a yellow-orange light) across the UK have a bigger detrimental impact on moths

How you can help

Eliminate artificial light at night wherever this can be done without jeopardising people's safety.

Reduce the duration of artificial light at night by switching off during quiet times or using motion-activated lighting.

Minimise the impact of your light by ensuring light is only directed where it is needed and not into the sky.

Moths are attracted to UV and blue lights so avoid using any bulbs that emit these.



Emperor Moth

What flowering plants are best?

Nectar provides insects with energy to fly and find a mate. As different species of moth are around at different times of the year it's best to aim to have as many nectar-bearing flowers out in as many months as possible, including early spring and late summer and autumn. Night-scented plants are particularly good, and actually evolved their night-time perfume to attract moths to pollinate their flowers, including:



Honeysuckle



Evening Primrose



Petunia



Jasmine



Six-spot Burnet

Did you know?

Without moths, many of your favourite wildflowers, including several native orchids, would be unable to reproduce.



Elephant Hawk-moth

You don't need a garden to create a 'nectar bar' for moths to stop and refuel - a roof terrace, balcony, window box or a couple of pots will do!

Show the caterpillars some love too!

One of the best ways to help moths is to create habitat for their caterpillars in your garden. Having the right foodplants for caterpillars is essential if you want to help the next generation to survive. Good foodplants for moth caterpillars include:



Elephant Hawk-moth Caterpillar

Some caterpillars also love an area with a mixture of native grasses left to grow long, as well as docks, brambles and nettles.

Fuchsia

Willow

Fox Glove

Oak

Mint

Apple



**MOTHS
MATTER**

Our Projects

Kent's Magnificent Moths



East Kent is home to the greatest concentration of rare and threatened moth species in the UK. They face many threats including habitat loss and changing land management. Our Kent's Magnificent Moths project aims to save and celebrate these beautiful moths along with offering opportunities to support and upskill the local community to encourage a long-lasting legacy of boosting our UK moth population. One of the tasks is to grow foodplants including Wild Carrot, Hog's Fennel and Marsh Mallow to encourage moths to breed in new ranges.



Species Recovery Programme

Our Species Recovery Programme aims to undertake conservation work on a number of priority micro and macro moths. The project is delivered by staff and volunteers, often in partnership with many other organisations. The key activities include: undertaking surveying to gain a better understanding of distribution, monitoring key populations and habitats, compiling species distribution and monitoring data to help target management and providing advice to land owners.



Black-veined moth



Dark Bordered Beauty



Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth



Drab Looper Habitat

Scotland

In Scotland, we have established a captive population of the Dark Bordered Beauty to undertake an assisted translocation to establish at least two new breeding populations.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, action for threatened species is taking place by providing management advice for landowners in key areas for endangered moth species, including the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth.

Wales

In Wales we have undertaken woodland management to increase the breeding habitat for the scarce and declining Drab Looper.

Join us and get involved with volunteering, fundraising, recording and monitoring!





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www.butterfly-conservation.org/moths

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