

An Introduction to Moths



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Introduction to Moths



There are more than 2,500 species of moth in the UK. Nine hundred are classified as macro-moths and the rest are usually smaller, micro-moths. Moths are found everywhere, from the sunny seaside to freezing mountain tops but numbers of these intriguing insects are falling. Over 60 species have gone extinct in the last 150 years. There are many misconceptions about moths that detract from the important role they play in our ecosystem. Luckily Butterfly Conservation is on hand to clear up a few moth myths and introduce you to some of our most common species.

Discover more marvellous moths, learn where to find them and how you can help protect them at www.butterfly-conservation.org

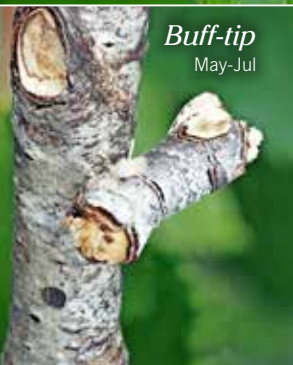
Above left: Blood-vein flies May-Sep
Right: Cinnabar flies May-Aug



Elephant Hawk-moth
May-Aug



Garden Tiger
Jul-Aug



Buff-tip
May-Jul



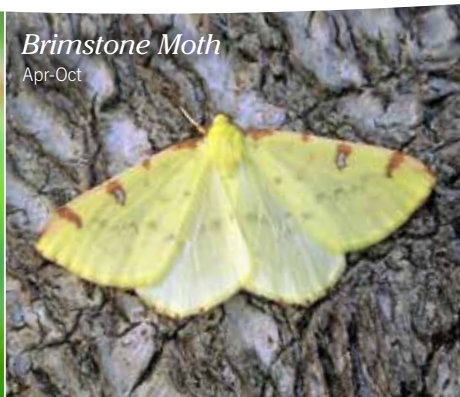
Poplar Hawk-moth
May-Aug



Six-spot Burnet
Jun-Aug



Mother Shipton
May-Jul



Brimstone Moth
Apr-Oct

1 *Moths are not as colourful as butterflies*
Some moths such as the spectacular, pink, **Elephant Hawk-moth** are very vividly coloured.

2 *Moths are ugly*
The **Garden Tiger** proves that moths can be beautiful. Many moth species feature fascinating patterns that have evolved to aid camouflage.

3 *Moths are boring*
Some moths may look dull at first glance but they are actually masters of disguise. The **Buff-tip** convincingly mimics a broken twig to blend into its surroundings.

4 *Moths only fly by night*
Although most are nocturnal, there are many more moths flying about in the daytime than butterflies. The **Cinnabar moth** is commonly mistaken for a butterfly.



5 *Only butterflies have clubbed antennae*
Feathery or fine feelers are more common but some moths like the **Six-spot Burnet** have club-like antennae.

6 *Moths are hairier than butterflies*
Moths tend to have larger scales on their

wings, which make them look more dense and fluffy but both butterflies and moths can have furry bodies. The **Brimstone Moth** is less hairy than the Brimstone butterfly.

7 *Moths eat clothes*
Less than 1% of moth species in the UK have caterpillars that eat natural fibres. Almost all the others feed on plants. Often a moth's name offers a clue about the diet of its caterpillar, like the **Mint moth** which is most likely to be found in the herb garden.



8 *Moths aren't important*
Moths are an essential part of the food chain, providing food for birds, bats, hedgehogs and amphibians. Moths are also pollinators. Without this essential service many wildflowers, including several native orchids, would be unable to reproduce.

9 *Moths bring bad luck*
Although some of our larger moths, like the **Poplar Hawk-moth**, can be unnerving, stories of moths being bad omens are just superstition. It is moth declines that indicate danger, demonstrating changes in the environment that will have a negative impact on bigger creatures. To secure a safe future for us and all wildlife, we need moths.

Join Us

Become a member of Butterfly Conservation for half price and discover more about moths in your welcome pack. Visit www.butterfly-conservation.org/lovemoths



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Front cover: Humming-bird Hawk-moth (Samantha Batty) **Back cover:** Emperor Moth (Dean Morley)