

Moths

a brief guide



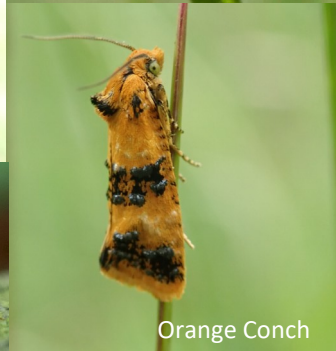
Eyed Hawkmoth



Mint moth



Red -barred Gold



Orange Conch

There are over 2400 species of moth in the UK and many of these can be found in the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Some are very rare but many more are common, this leaflet aims to introduce you to some of the colourful and fascinating moths you may see in both town and countryside, in the daytime as well as at night.

Moths are a vital part of our ecosystem supporting many species of mammals, birds and insects. Moths like butterflies are also excellent indicators of the health of our environment and are important pollinators.

Butterfly Conservation members actively record moths species and numbers, our records help show how habitats are changing due to habitat loss and climate change contributing to the National Moth Recording Scheme.

We welcome your records too.

Moth Conservation

We have several species of moth in our region which are of special concern and are nationally rare, including the Four spotted, Silvery arches, Pale Shining brown, Sloe Carpet, Barberry Carpet, and those shown below. We survey for these species to monitor known populations. We also work with landowners to help maintain good habitat for them to successfully breed.



Forester



Striped Lychnis



Drab looper



Four spotted



Heart Moth

Photo Peter Cuss

Photo Ben Sale

Ilya Ustyantsev

Moth trapping

The only way to see some moths is to trap them, they are identified and then released unharmed. If you are interested in learning how to moth trap then we hold public events where you can see moths and meet members of the Moth group. See our events page for details. <https://www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/> We also have a small number of loan traps e-mail Peter at pj.cuss@gmail.com for details.



Sources of Information There are excellent resources to help you identify moths.

Flying tonight https://shiny-apps.ceh.ac.uk/whats_flying_tonight this shows photos of all the species likely to be seen in your area on that day.

Books; Moths of Great Britain and Ireland by Waring, Townsend and Lewington
Micro moths of Great Britain and Ireland by Sterling, Parsons and Lewington



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Butterfly Conservation

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468)

Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset,
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<https://www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/>

Garden moths a selection, dayflying or easily disturbed in daytime



Scarlet Tiger



Yellow Shell



Angle Shades



Small Magpie



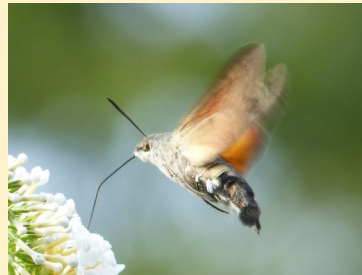
Mint Moth (*Pyrausta aurata*)



Twenty Plume



Nettle-tap



Humming-bird Hawk-moth

Our gardens provide valuable habitat for moths. Nectar for adults and foodplants for caterpillars. The more native plants you grow the more moth species you can support, leaving grass uncut until September and leaving a few areas untidied will also support our moths by giving them places to pupate..

Some common moth caterpillars

they come in huge range of sizes shapes and colours



Yellow-tail



Cinnabar



A Bagworm



Poplar Hawk-moth



Pale Tussock



Burnet Moth



A geometrid species



Mullein Moth



A Coleophorid



Mottled Umber



Ruby tiger

The role of a caterpillar is to eat and store enough energy to allow the adult to mate and lay eggs. To do this they need to evade predators, many are camouflaged, brightly coloured to show they are distasteful or covered in irritating hairs. If you want to see caterpillars in your garden then you will need to grow their foodplants.

See our caterpillar leaflet or our web site for more details. A good book for identification is 'Caterpillars of Great Britain and Ireland' by Henwood, Sterling and Lewington

Day flying moths of the Chilterns

A selection of species that can be seen on our Chalk grasslands or Woods



Mother Shipton can you see her face?



Silver -Y it migrates here annually



Burnet Companion



Shaded Broad-bar



Cinnebar the caterpillars feed on Ragwort



Green Carpet



Dusky Sallow often rests on flowers



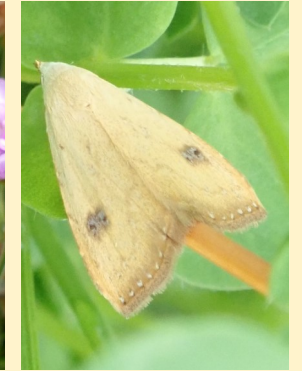
Crambus lathionella, a grass moth



Brassy Longhorn always on scabious flowers



Six-spot Burnet, there are also two Five-spot species, so you need to check carefully



Straw Dot



Treble-bar



White Plume



Common Plume one of several similar species



Clay triple lines



Small Purple-barred



Red twin-spot Carpet

Night flying moths of the Chilterns

A small selection of moths you may see at traps in the wider countryside



Light Arches



Black Arches



Buff Arches



Figure of Eighty



Privet hawk-moth



Peppered Moth



Elephant Hawk-moth



Hebrew character



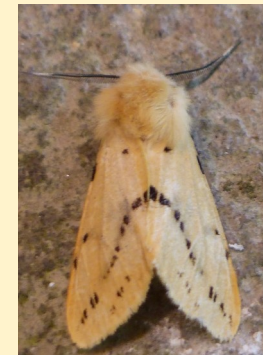
Buff tip

Habitat specialists are unlikely to be found in urban gardens, our members with the support of landowners trap at Nature Reserves to monitor populations and build a picture of the species present. Knowing which species are present helps land to be appropriately managed. Some species are more widespread like those shown above.

Moths at your window Night flying moths



Scalloped Hazel



Buff Ermine



A Pug moth



Common Carpet



Heart & Dart



Swallow-tailed moth



Brimstone Moth



Treble Lines



Muslin moth

Some moths will come to your window or into the house if you leave windows open. Moths are sensitive to even small amounts of light and this can disrupt breeding, so please, always close your curtains and switch off garden lights when you come inside.