

Moths

Moths under threat

- Moths are declining in the UK. Studies have found the overall number of moths has decreased by 28% since 1968.
- The situation is particularly bad in southern Britain, where moth numbers are down by 40%.
- The abundance of the UK's larger moths has crashed during the past 40 years with three species becoming extinct since 2000.

Source: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths>



Amy Lewis

Moths are important

- Moths and their caterpillars are important food items for many other species, including amphibians, small mammals, bats and many bird species.
- Moth caterpillars are especially important for feeding young chicks, including those of most familiar garden birds such as the Blue Tit and Great Tit, Robin, Wren and Blackbird.
- Research has indicated that a decrease in the abundance of bats over farmland is related to the decline in the moths that they depend on.
- The reasons for the loss of moths are likely to be many and complex, and more research is needed to understand what is happening. However, the loss of habitats resulting from more intensive agriculture, commercial forestry, industry and urban development are likely to be major reasons.
- Other things which may be causing problems for moths include changes in the way we manage our gardens, pesticides, herbicides and light pollution. Climate change is also affecting moths. Whatever the causes, the decrease in moth numbers is a warning to us that all is not well with our environment.

Source: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/why-moths-matter>

How Wildlife Trusts help

- Managing nature reserves which provide vital habitats for moths.
- Promoting wildlife-friendly gardening in our home to help provide food and habitats for moths.

How people can help

- Plant flowers that release their scent in the evening to attract moths and, ultimately, bats looking for an insect-meal into your garden
- Flowers that release their scent in the evening are a big draw for moths – such as tobacco plants, buddleia, evening primrose, jasmine and honeysuckle.
- Have a diverse range of plants, shrubs, grasses and flowers to provide foodplants for caterpillars.
- Plant native trees like willow and oak.
- Reduce your chemical use and keep hard landscaping (gravel, decking, etc.) to a minimum to increase the habitats available.
- Don't be so tidy! Leave areas of long grass and wild plants, and don't clear up dead plant matter at the end of the year – caterpillars and pupae may overwinter here.

Other resources

- <https://www.mothnight.info/>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-attract-moths-and-bats-your-garden>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/search?search=Moth>
- <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths>
- <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/why-moths-matter>



Malcolm Storey