

Chat recorded from webinar 26th February 2024

Dr Emelie Ellis The pollinator night-shift: helping moths in our towns and cities

Many affirmative comments and thanks edited out, and where possible, answers or follow-up chat is associated with the initial question.

Alison: Hi. Is the 2,500 figure the number of species in the UK?

Mark Goddard (WLGf): Hi Alison, yes, that's the approx. number

Brigit Strawbridge: Are there any nocturnal butterfly species?

Steve Head: The American moth-butterflies Hedyliidae are.

Moth S: Larval food plants are vital too

Alison: Hi again. Hoping you might cover this but one night last summer I saw what (from subsequent research) appeared to be an aquatic moth. I'd had no idea they were a Thing! It was in my pond and seemed to be feeding on something at the water level, on plant stems (not nectar). I'd be really interested to know more about about aquatic moths.

Ian Harding: The Water Veneer moth has aquatic larvae, they feed on pondweed.

Alison: <https://www.ukmoths.org.uk/species/acentria-ephemerella/>

Alison: Thanks. Yeah, re aquatic moth: was an adult moth, not a larva. At first I thought it was drowning but was v happy doing its thing (whatever that is) in the pond.

Steve Head: The china-mark moths eg *Elopha* spp are aquatic and feed on water plants

Steve Head: Small China-mark *Cataclysta lemnata* feeds on duckweed!

Nigel Jennings: Do you tend to use non-destructive moth trapping? Or do you have to kill them to ID later?

aod: I find they like to use the wooden garden gate as a habitat.

Nigel Jennings: Were you just looking at larger moths or were micromoths included? I note that your pictures tend to be the larger moths. Nigel

Lou: Can mixed native hedging play a helpful role?

Dave: What typical distance do moths fly to feed?

Lorna Brookins: Did you see any difference between moth species in habitat preference?

Brigit Strawbridge: You mentioned that larger moth species are declining. Apologies if you are coming to this later, but are smaller species also declining at a similar rate? Or has there not been enough research yet to know? Thank you

Joanne: Were there higher numbers of moths in isolated complex gardens, even if there wasn't the diversity?

Dave: The UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) in Wallingford are doing pollen analysis in honey from hives all around the country

Nigel Jennings: How did you survey moths visiting flowers in the dark? Nigel

Steve Head: Do you have examples of neighbourhood gardeners working together?

Becky Henning-Lee: Could you suggest any flowering shrubs that moths like the most?
Sally Cunningham: raspberries always seem popular, also honeysuckles
Moth S: Valerian

Steve Head: Excellent research Emilie! especially th resource partitioning with bees

Debi Ulrey-Crosby: Could you please repeat how we can live trap moths to count them. thanks

Brigit Strawbridge: How long should you leave between using a moth trap in a single garden?
Moth S: Couple of nights Brigit.

Maggie Zebroski: I have found more moth caterpillars on my nettle patch than butterfly caterpillars.
Could you give us your top 3 moth larval food plants for moths in gardens please?

Robert Ruston: You talked about plants for moths for feeding and larva stage development. Are moths using the same plants for resting in during the daytime - and does the plant species for this matter?

Safia: Which tree species were most visited by the moths?

Lou: Six-spot burnet moths visit the birdsfoot-trefoil in my urban garden

Maggie Zebroski: I've found Borage is a good larval food plant for moths - Angle Shades and Knot
Grass moth love it in particular

Kathy: Mint moths (micro moth) like my Oregano in flower

Maggie Zebroski: They love my Marjoram...

Sarah Pitt: Thank you for that we have loads of marjoram in the garden!

Sally Cunningham: and Calamintha spp as well as Mentha...

Ali Vitale-Newman: Don't forget to share you pictures and info on the WLGf Facebook group!

Steve Head: Great new paper on why moths fly to light <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-024-44785-3>

Steve Head: Moths essentially keep their backs to the sky/moonlight, so they spiral round a point source

Moth S: Lots of good moth sites on FB that can help beginners

Brigit Strawbridge: Is there any evidence to suggest the species with wingless females suffer more from light pollution... if the males go to the street lights instead of to where the females are waiting?

Julia Cowie: what is the problem with buddleias please?

Judith Conroy WLGf: There can be problems with them becoming invasive (and crowding out other species). The reason there was a chuckle is that the previous winter webinar 2 weeks ago was about invasive species and buddleias were discussed

Sally Cunningham: they grow everywhere... often on roofs or in gutters and can cause structural problems.... Also (like other insect friendly plants which can be invasive) sometimes subject to horticultural version of ethnic cleansing....

Maggie Zebroski: I'm fascinated by moths in Finland, as you are researching in Helsinki. Are there more moths as they have more dark hours then us?

Judith Conroy WLGf: Thank you so much to everyone for being here and do visit our website and sign up to be a member (for free!) www.wlgf.org

Ali Vitale-Newman: join the [Facebook group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/147174722296830/) too
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