

## Identifying Autumn Moths



The location of many of John Constable's paintings, Flatford Mill runs over 120 Natural History and Arts courses in a unique and tranquil learning environment.

### Course Overview

Moths are vital links in the web of life and come in many shapes and forms. Some species are surprisingly large and others almost too small to notice; some are wonderfully coloured and patterned, while others are dull and cryptic or amazingly camouflaged. Emergence periods of adult moths come in waves through the year, so there are different species found flying from month to month and from season to season.

This new day course is one of a suite of three at Flatford Mill in spring, summer and autumn this year that aim to introduce you to the fascinating challenges of identifying and understanding the life cycles of the larger 'macro-moths'. It will also cover how to submit records to Local Environmental Records Centres.

### Course Description

The evening before the course the Tutor will set a series of live moth traps in different habitats around the Centre grounds. These use different types of light source to attract and catch a sample of the moths that are on the wing through the night. The overnight weather will to a large extent determine the extent of the catch both in terms of species diversity and numbers, so we have to keep our fingers crossed for the right conditions!

The moths will be in resting mode during daylight hours, so this makes them relatively easy to study during the day. Later that evening they will be released back into the environment at the location where they were trapped so they can continue doing what they need to do i.e. reproduce. As adults, moths can be on the wing for days or even weeks, so we will only be causing a brief intervention into their life cycles.

### Outline arrangements for the day

0900: Arrival and registration at Field Centre Reception

0930: Course commences

1230: Lunch

1630: Course ends and departure

What follows is an ideal format for the various activities the course programme aims to cover. The numbers of moths caught in the traps will naturally determine the detail of what we can do, the amount of time we spend on identifying live individuals and the order in which the course elements are placed.

- Introduction to moths and their place in the animal kingdom
- Visits to the moth traps in turn to secure the catch and safely store individuals in plastic 'moth pots'
- Discussion of the different types of moth trap and other trapping methods
- Overview of the macro-moth families and their main characteristics
- Identifying the moths caught to the appropriate family and species
- Slideshow of other moths typically on the wing at this time of year
- The range of moth ID guides available in print and on the internet
- Other moth books of interest
- Recording moths in your local area

Note that although this course will focus on macro-moth species, common micro-moths will not be completely ignored, particularly since some of them are larger than the smaller macros!

### **About the Tutor**

Edward Jackson is a former Head of Centre at FSC Flatford Mill. He now runs his own environmental consultancy specialising in wildlife surveys and short training courses.

He has been recording moths for over 10 years and is looking forward to the opportunity to share his knowledge and experience with others who have a recent or growing interest in moths and moth identification.

## What to Bring

- Your own packed lunch
- Please watch the weather forecast and bring suitable weatherproof clothing and footwear
- It could be muddy in places, but walking boots or strong outdoor shoes should be fine and wellies would only be necessary if it's been extremely wet in the week beforehand
- Sun cream and sun hat if appropriate
- An A4 or A5 notebook and things to write with
- Small daysack to carry your personal items
- Camera, if required
- There will be copies of the following macro-moth identification guide available for participants to use, as it's the main recommendation for beginners:

Concise Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland

by Martin Townsend, Paul Waring and Richard Lewington

*British Wildlife Publications: 2007*

If you do want to obtain your own copy, try to find the now out-of-print spiralbound version second-hand, as it's the easiest format to use. New copies of the standard paperback version can be viewed here: [www.britishwildlife.com/site/bookshop](http://www.britishwildlife.com/site/bookshop)  
Click on the picture of the cover to be directed through to the NHBS retail website.

- Even now, no single popular moth guide is fully comprehensive. The following titles complement each other and will also be available to view and use on the day. So there's no need to obtain them at this stage, but bring them along if you have them already:

British Moths: A Photographic Guide to the Moths of Britain and Ireland

by Chris Manley

*Bloomsbury: 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2015*

Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland

by Martin Townsend, Paul Waring and Richard Lewington

*British Wildlife Publications: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2009*

This is the 'full-strength' version of the Concise Guide

A revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition is due to be published in February 2017

Moths of Great Britain and Ireland

by Sean Clancy

*BugBook Publishing: 2012*

## Start and finish times

Registration at Field Centre Reception is from 0900 to 0920.  
Please arrive by 0900 to give us time to show you around.  
The course will commence at 0930 and end at 1630.

## Suffolk Biological Recording Bursaries

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS) and Suffolk Naturalists Society (SNS) are offering a number of bursaries to support individuals wishing to attend some of the Natural History courses offered at the FSC Flatford Mill. The bursaries are for selected courses that provide the skills and experience to identify and record Suffolk wildlife.

The bursary will provide for up to 100% of the non-residential fees for a course. Successful applicants will still need to pay for any accommodation booked at FSC Flatford Mill or nearby B&Bs that they require before or after a one day course.

Full award of the bursary is conditional on recipients submitting a minimum number of species records (60 in the case of this moth course), within a certain time period. Records must be for sites within Suffolk, although the recorder does not necessarily need to be resident in the county.

Click this link for further details of the criteria and conditions:

<https://www.field-studies-council.org/centres/flatfordmill/learn/natural-history-bursaries.aspx>

## The other complementary courses in this series

If you would like to extend your knowledge of moths in other seasons the other two courses in this 2017 series are:

**Identifying Spring Moths** - Saturday 18 March

**Identifying Autumn Moths** - Saturday 14 October

Participants on these courses are also eligible for Suffolk Biological Recording Bursaries.

## How to book

Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre on 01206 297110.  
We are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends.  
Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: [www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)