

Identifying Moths and Butterflies



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

A weekend introducing the identification and natural history of one of the most attractive insect groups, using only live trapping techniques. Working through the moth catches in the mornings will be followed by butterfly identification in the afternoons. Local species include pine and privet hawk moths and white admiral and purple hairstreak butterflies.

Course Description

The proposed programme for the weekend is as follows:

Friday evening - An illustrated talk on the biology and life-cycle of moths, followed by "sugaring" some of the riverside trees to attract various moths.

Saturday - Emptying the MV trap that was run overnight on Valley Farm lawn, followed by a morning in the lab learning to identify the families and species of moths that we caught in the trap. In the afternoon, a trip to the delightful Stour Wood RSPB Reserve to look for butterflies (including White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak and Silver-washed Fritillary) and day-flying moths.

Saturday evening - An illustrated talk on the biology and life-cycle of butterflies, followed by more moth-trapping.

Sunday - Emptying the moth trap again, followed by another session in the lab working through our finds. In the afternoon, a walk in the vicinity of the Centre and surrounding fields to look for more butterflies (including browns and skippers) and day-flying moths.

About the Tutor

Sheila Wright is a natural history museum curator with a lifelong interest in moths and butterflies (and in the latter's chief predators - bats!). She is also a county moth recorder and is working on several projects involving the long-term population monitoring of these insects

Start and finish times

Check in is available from **1600** on Friday, but the first formal activity is dinner at **1900** (with the bar open from **1845**) followed by an evening classroom session. Residents: Please aim to arrive on Friday between **1600 and 1800** to allow us sufficient time to show you to your accommodation and around the communal areas.

Non-residents: You do not need to arrive quite so early but please can you be here by **1800** as we need to show you the communal areas as well.

The course ends at **1600** on Sunday.

What to Bring

If you have any personal moth and butterfly books, a x10 hand lens, or moth-collecting pots, then do bring them along - although all of these will be available at the Centre for the beginner.

☑ Close-focusing binoculars, if you have them, are always useful for getting a good view of our more retiring butterflies

☑ An SLR camera with suitable attachments for close-up work, if you are interested in the photography of moths and butterflies.

☑ Any photographs you have taken of moths and butterflies that you would like identified, or simply to share with other course members.

☑ Pens, pencils and a notebook

☑ Warm clothing and a **torch** for the moth-trapping, plus a lunchbox, comfortable shoes and waterproof clothing (just in case!) for the excursions.

The field excursions, whilst not strenuous, may involve circular walks of between two and three miles in order to see all of the target species. Participants will therefore need a reasonable degree of physical fitness.

Recommended Reading

Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles, Bernard Skinner (3rd Edition, 2009, Apollo Books, ISBN 978-8788757-90-3) - an excellent guide to the identification of the larger moths, but rather expensive. (Copies will be on hand at the Centre during the weekend.)

☞ *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*, Paul Waring and Martin Townsend (either the 2009 edition - British Wildlife Publications, ISBN 978-0953139-98-9 or the latest 2017 edition – Bloomsbury Publishing ISBN 978-1472930-31-6).

☞ *Pocket Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Ireland*, Richard Lewington (2nd Edition, 2015, Bloomsbury Publishing ISBN 978-1910389-04-1)

Special Offer

Bring a friend!

If you are attending a course at Flatford Mill at the sole occupancy price, we are offering a special rate for a friend or partner not enrolled on the course to also stay at £50 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast.

How to book

Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre; we are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends. Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: www.field-studies-council.org.