

# GET STARTED WITH MOTHS

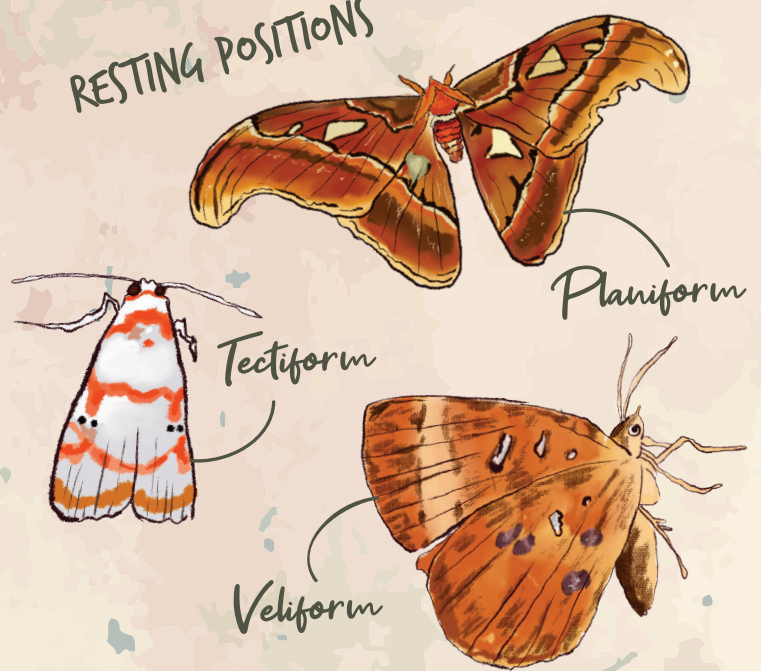


Moths are insects belonging to the order **Lepidoptera**, (meaning 'scale-winged' in Greek) which they share with butterflies.

These insects are of great value and **play essential roles**:

- as pollinators
- as decomposers
- as food for species like birds & bats
- as bioindicators
- they are important for scientific research

## RESTING POSITIONS



## MAKING OBSERVATIONS

- 🦋 Note the **shape & size** of the body
- 🦋 Look for presence and position of **wings**
- 🦋 Categorise the type of **antennae**
- 🦋 Pay attention to **colours, markings, and patterns**
- 🦋 Observe the distinct **life stages**: eggs, caterpillars, cocoons & adults
- 🦋 Watch out for **behaviours** like

**Feeding:** Different species feed on nectar, leaves, fruits, honey, decaying organic matter, and even animal blood and tears.

**Moth Assemblages:** Groups of male moths gather around recently emerged female moths for mating.

**Defence Mechanisms:** They protect themselves using camouflage, mimicry, chemical defences like secretions & irritating hair and auditory defences.

## TYPE OF ANTENNAE



1. FEATHERY (Bipectinate)



2. THREAD-LIKE (Filiform)



3. ONE-SIDED FEATHERY (Pectinate)



4. SERRATED

## FIELD TIPS

- 🦋 Their presence can be indicated by – eaten leaves, squiggly lines on leaves made by leaf-mining caterpillars as they eat, eggs on leaves, cocoons on plants & in soil.
- 🦋 Look for moths on both sides of the leaf, in leaf litter, on rocks, moist ground, flowers and other food sources, and near light sources/streetlights.

Defence Mechanism -  
Mimics wasps

Diurnal - Active  
during the day



## MOTH WATCHING

- 🦋 **How to observe moths?**  
'Light sheet' is an effective method for studying moths.
- 🦋 **When is a good time to see moths?**
  - During or after monsoon
  - In hilly regions, March to June
  - Twilight - at dawn, dusk



GEOMETRID MOTHT CATERPILLAR,  
MIMICKING A TWIG



LIGHT SHEET METHOD TO  
DOCUMENT MOTHT DIVERSITY



MULBERRY SILK MOTHT  
ON A COCOON

## EXPLORE SAFELY

- 🦋 Certain moth species have irritating hairs as caterpillars, which they also use to make their cocoons. Touching them can irritate your skin.