

## It's Time to Get Excited About Moths!

Written by: Lorraine McCay, Park Superintendent of Cape May Point State Park and Bellplain State Forest

National Moth Week, an annual event taking place the last week of July, encourages people to learn about, observe and collect data on moths. If you're asking what's so interesting about moths, here are a few facts about them:

- There are approximately 11,000 species of moths in the US, more than 10 times the number of butterfly species.
- Some moths are pollinators; others don't eat at all!
- Moths are an important food source for birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and many invertebrates.
- Birds raising their young depend on moth caterpillars for their chicks.
- A male moth can smell a female more than 7 miles away. They detect odor molecules with their antennae.
- Moths can be as small as a pinhead or as large as your hand.
- All moths are not brown! They come in a variety of colors.
- Most moths are nocturnal, but a few fly during the day.



Cecropia Moths Mating



Luna Moth

Besides all this, they are fun to attract, look at, and try to identify. You can go to the website, [www.nationalmothweek.org](http://www.nationalmothweek.org) to find events scheduled to see and learn about these insects.

Give it a try! "Mothing" can be as simple as getting a field guide and turning on the porch light or visit our "Explore the Outdoors" site for a mothing activity.