Butterflies and moths

Objective: For students to understand the difference between moths and butterflies, to understand their role in ecosystems and to survey where they live.

Equipment/resources provided at Bawdsey

- Butterfly nets
- Clear containers with magnifying glass
- FSC Identification sheets
- Moth trap (booked in advance if available)

Lesson plan

1. Ensure students are careful when capturing their specimens. What do the students already know about butterflies and moths? Where do they expect to find them?
2. Catch butterfly specimens (moths should already be caught in the moth trap that is set over night).
3. Look closely, what differences can you find between butterflies and moths.
4. Identify the species and record the information on the class data sheet. Where were most butterflies found? Why do we need butterflies?
5. Make a drawing of a butterfly or moth if there is time.

What are the differences?

- Butterflies are brightly coloured day flying insects. Moths tend to be drab and fly at night and are attracted to light. However, there are some day flying moths.
- Butterflies rest with their wings vertical so you can only see the underside. Moths rest with their wings down, so you can only see the top.
- Butterflies have knobs at the end of their antennae. A moth's antenna can be plain or feathery.
- Butterflies have thin, slender, hairless bodies. Moths tend to have fat furry bodies. This is because moths need to conserve heat during cool nights and butterflies need to absorb heat from the sun.
- Butterflies develop in an unprotected chrysalis hanging from a branch. Moths develop in a chrysalis protected by cocoon on the ground.
- Butterflies have no structure that attaches their forewings to their hind wings. Moths have small hooks or bristles which attach the wings together during flight.

Data collecting sheet for moths at Bawdsey

Date:

Species	Number caught	Distinguishing features

Data collecting sheet for butterflies at Bawdsey

Date:

Species	Number caught	Distinguishing features