



Mothing at Night for Teens and Adults

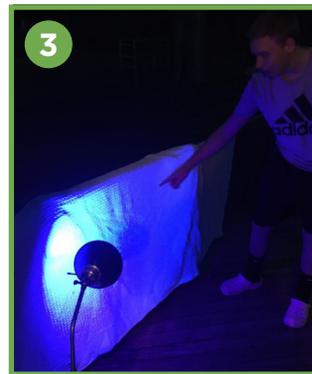
Anyone who has ever sat outside near a campfire or porchlight at night knows that moths fly toward light (although scientists aren't really sure why). Use this behavior to your advantage to study some of the more than 2500 moths that are found in Ohio.

ITEMS YOU WILL NEED:

White or light-colored fabric (like a sheet) and a light source

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

UV or blacklight, hand lens or magnifying glass, camera, and moth ID guide or app (such as iNaturalist)



Moths are active year-round if temperatures are above about 50 degrees, but the best time to find a diversity of moths is a still, warm summer night.

1. Hang your light-colored sheet or fabric vertically as far as you can from other light sources.
2. Using your light source, illuminate your sheet. Ideally, your light source will illuminate most of the sheet. Bright lights and lights with shorter wavelengths, such as UV or blacklights will attract a wider array of moths and other insects.
3. Now wait for moths to fly to the light! You should start seeing some moths and other insects appear quickly, but the longer you wait and observe, the more diversity you're likely to see.

Use a magnifying glass or hand lens to take a closer look at your moths. You can use an ID guide or app to identify your moths, or just make observations about the different moths you see. Pay attention to size, colors, and patterns.

Return to illuminate your sheet and observe moths periodically throughout the night and compare the moths you see at different times.

Share your mothing photos on Instagram and tag [@cincynature](https://www.instagram.com/cincynature).

TO FURTHER EXTEND THIS ACTIVITY:

Share your observations with a citizen science project, like [butterflies and moths of North America](#).

Explore the hypotheses of [why moths might be attracted to light](#).

Do a little inquiry! Ask questions based on your observations and then record data. You can document the differences in time of night, different sources of illumination, or the numbers of different species. There are so many opportunities for investigation!