

NATIONAL Moth Week

Global Citizen Science

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Special Tours of the National Insect Collection Slated During National Moth Week at Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

Behind-the-scenes tours of the National Insect Collection will be offered at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., July 20-26, during National Moth Week, a global citizen science project that engages moth enthusiasts in observing and documenting moths in their local communities, parks and backyards.

Dr. John Brown, research entomologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will offer one hour-long tour per day from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday of that week. Tours will be limited to 10 visitors. Registration is required by contacting Brown by email at John.Brown@ars.usda.gov.

The museum houses the world's largest collection of natural history specimens and one of the world's largest insect collections, estimated at 35 million insect specimens, including nearly 2.4 million moths. Although the tour will focus on Lepidoptera – butterflies and moths – it also will include “a dose of beetles and other insects, and highlight the collection storage facilities and research areas,” Brown said.

National Moth Week runs from July 20 to 28 this year. It was established by the Friends of the East Brunswick Environmental Commission, a conservation and education group in New Jersey, to literally and figuratively shine a spotlight on moths and their ecological importance as well as their biodiversity.

National Moth Week offers people, young and old, a unique opportunity to become a citizen scientist and contribute scientific data about moths. Anyone can register an event, free of charge. Through partnerships with major online biological data depositories, National Moth Week participants can help map moth distribution and provide needed information on other life history aspects of moths around the globe. Last year, more than 300 events were registered in 49 states and 30 countries.

To learn more about National Moth Week and how to organize and register an event, visit nationalmothweek.org.

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