

Moths: More Than Meets the Eye

By: Katherine Kissner, Naturalist

While butterflies may steal the spotlight when it comes to the order Lepidoptera, moths aren't all drab browns and gloomy grays; there are many species just as ornate and colorful as their diurnal counterparts!

In many cases, bright colors signal that the moth is bad tasting, or even toxic, to predators looking to snag a late-night snack. This phenomenon is called "aposematism" and is found throughout moth and butterfly species. Monarch butterflies are the leading example with their stark orange and black wings to warn of the toxic cardiac glycosides they've stored up from the milkweed they ate as caterpillars. Virgin tiger moths (*Grammia virgo*) are another example of aposematism. Their warning colors are twofold: the black and white stripes of their forewings and the black and orange patterning of their hindwings, which they flash at potential predators. All of this warns that the moth is unpalatable. They will also click back at bats in an auditory version of these warning colors. The rosy maple moth (*Dryocampa rubicunda*) is bright pink and yellow but isn't toxic at all! This trick relies on predators associating bad tasting bugs with stand-out colors.



Sometimes ornate patterns and bright colors are not a warning at all and, instead, are used to mimic larger animals. Cecropia moths (*Hyalophora cecropia*) have spots on the tips of their forewings that resemble the head of a snake, and as our largest species of moth in North America (up to seven inches across), this is a pretty effective illusion. It is also why they're named for the first king of Athens, Cecrops, who was said to have the lower half of a snake. The Io moth (*Automeris io*), of the same family Saturniidae, has a giant eye spot on each of its hindwings. When threatened, these moths will flash the spots to trick any predators into believing they're dealing with a much larger animal. This type of eyespot mimicry is also found in many members of the Saturniidae family, as well as species of fish, birds, and reptiles!

So, the next time you spot a flash of color as the summer sun is setting, take another look because you may just find a moth you've never seen before!

July and August are PACKED with fun!



- Music at The Lodge
- All Aboard Mini Train Rides
- Discovery Drop-Ins
- Senior Strides
- Forest Therapy Walks
- Starry, Starry Nights
- Slo Roll Bike Rides
- Art Programs
- Paddling Programs
- K-9 Kapers
- Healthy Dose of Nature Hikes
- Natural Discoveries Hiking Series
- Nature Book Club
- Tales for Tots

Visit medinacountyparks.com for program details.



In celebration of the park district's 60th anniversary, Friends of Medina County Parks is selling t-shirts for \$15 each. The "In My Parks Era" t-shirts are available for purchase (cash or check made out to Friends of Medina County Parks) at Oenslager Nature Center each Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 12 to 5 p.m. The t-shirts are also available at Medina County Park District Headquarters Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Celebrate Medina County Park District's 60th anniversary by taking part in the Park Perks Challenge! This is a self-guided adventure where you will need to successfully complete challenges to collect perk points to earn park prizes! Challenge yourself across three categories: *Research It, Seek and Find*, and *See You There*, all designed to help you explore and learn about Medina County parks.

The challenge runs through October 4. Download the form at www.medinacountyparks.com. Hard copies are available at the nature centers or park headquarters.

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 **ORMACO**
Ohio Regional Music Arts Cultural Outreach
www.ormaco.org

THE REDBUDS

AN EVENING OF
ACOUSTIC FOLK MUSIC

**SATURDAY
JULY 19
7 PM** **FREE**

**BUFFALO CREEK RETREAT
8708 HUBBARD VALLEY ROAD
SEVILLE, OH 44273**

Friends of Medina County Parks and Ohio Regional Music Arts and Cultural Outreach (ORMACO) present "An Evening of Acoustic Folk Music with The Redbuds." This all-female folk group from Columbus, Ohio plays and sings Appalachian folk songs on fiddle, guitar, banjo, and upright bass. They've performed for The Central Ohio Folk Festival and the Columbus Arts Festival, and their self-titled first album can be found on Spotify and Apple Music.

The concert is free and will take place inside Buffalo Creek Retreat. For more information on the venue, call (330) 722-9364. For more information on the band, visit www.theredbuds.com.

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED BY FRIENDS OF MEDINA COUNTY PARKS

 **FRIENDS** of Medina County Parks
 **CAMEL CREEK NATIVES**
growing biodiversity

Native Plant Sale

CASH OR CHECKS ARE ACCEPTED FOR PAYMENT.

BRING YOUR OWN BOX FOR CARRYING PLANTS HOME.

**Oenslager Nature Center
6100 Ridge Road
Sharon Township
(use Wadsworth for city if using a GPS)**

**JULY 12 AND 13
JULY 19 AND 20
JULY 26 AND 27**

**SATURDAY HOURS
10 AM - 4 PM**

**SUNDAY HOURS
1 - 4 PM**

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NATIVE PLANT FESTIVAL - 9/6

