MOTH FUN FACTS

- NC has 174 species of butterflies, and 2,000-2,500 moths! That's 11 to 14 times as many moth species as there are butterflies.

- There is moth caterpillar that is carnivorous, the Ashen Pinion, Lithophane antennata which is a well-known predator of winter moths.

- Some tiger moths in the family Arctiidae are known to "jam" bat echolocation by producing sounds.

- The North Carolina Heritage Program lists 99 state concern moths mostly from the mountains, sandhills and coast.

- Many females of the Tussock family of moths don't have wings.

- The Hawk moth (Sphinx) is the worlds fastest flying insect attaining speed of over 50 kph

- Moth antennae are either feather like or a hair like filament.

- The Cecropia moth is North America's largest insect with a six inch wingspan.

- Moths have hairy bodies to help retain internal body temperature necessary for flight.

- Quite a few moths fly during the day, such as the Hummingbird Clearwing, Virginia Ctenucha and the Spear-Marked Black.

- In colder climates some moths can have a two year life cycle.

- Some moth caterpillars, such as the "Io" are covered with stinging hairs.

- Moths make up 80 percent of the order lepidoptera.

- A small group of moths are called "Bird Dropping" moths because -you guessed it- that's what they resemble when they are at rest.

- Moths navigate by two methods. They use the moon and stars when available and geomagnetic clues when light sources are obscured.

- Cloth Moths eat such things as wool, fur and other animal products. It is their ability to digest Keratin ....... a protein found in these foods.

- Some moths pupate under ground. Such as many of the Sphinx moths.

- Moths heat up their flight muscles by vibrating their wings, since they don't have the radiant energy of the sun at their disposal to serve that purpose.

- The Luna moth is born without a mouth.....it never eats or drinks.

- Hummingbird moths wings beat 70 times per second.

- Pellet like caterpillar excrement is called "Frass".
Male moths have larger antennae than females. Beneficial for detecting the pheromones released by females.

Pheromones can be dispersed through the tibia segment of the leg, scales on the wings or from the abdomen.

The Wooly Bear caterpillar we are all familiar with turns into......the Isabella Tiger Moth.

The Webworm caterpillars go into communal diapause.

Moths are capable of migration but they do so over much smaller distances.

Moths are active at different times of the night depending on species.

Giant Silkworm Moths have a 1 year life cycle.

Wing veins are useful for species identification - kinda like fingerprints.

The Clearwing family of moths resembles other flying insects like hornets, wasps and even Hummingbirds.

Cecropia larvae grow to about 4" in length.

Moths can produce as many as 10 broods per year.

Feeding caterpillars can be in such large and concentrated numbers that you can actually hear them eat.

Pheromones released by females can be detected by the males from as much as 8 kilometers away.

Some Case Moth caterpillars (Psychidae) build a case around themselves that they always carry with them. It is made of silk and pieces of plants or soil.

The caterpillars of some Snout Moths (Pyralididae) live in or on water-plants.

The females of some moth species lack wings, all they can do to move is crawl.

The Morgan's Sphinx Moth from Madagascar has a proboscis (tube mouth) that is 12 to 14 inches long to get the nectar from the bottom of a 12 inch deep orchid discovered by Charles Darwin.

Some moths never eat anything as adults because they don't have mouths. They must live on the energy they stored as caterpillars.

Butterflies and moths hear sounds through their wings.

To a moth the jingling sound of car keys sounds like a bat! In defence they will drop to the ground and hope to stay concealed.

Thousands of tiny scales and hairs cover moths wings, not powder.

Butterflies and moths both have an organ called the Johnston's organ which is at the base of a butterfly or moths antennae. This organ are responsible for maintaining the butterflys sense of balance and orientation, especially during flight.

A Cecropia moth has the ability to smell his mate up to 7 miles away with his feathery antennae.

Moths have a low temperature threshold. Pinions and sallows can be flying when the air temperature was in the low 40's with snow on the ground!