# Rising Interest in Moths and Call to Delay Lawn Mowing for Conservation Efforts



### Increasing Interest in Moths Amid Declining Populations

A surge of interest in moths, particularly among younger generations, has been noted as species face challenges from habitat loss. This was highlighted at the Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival this week, where the Moonshadow moth garden showcased moth-friendly plants like wild strawberry, scabious, knapweed, and buddleia.

Charles Waters, a moth expert and secretary of the Sussex Moth Group, emphasized the significance of moths as pollinators. While the UK has 59 butterfly species, it hosts around 2,500 moth species. Waters set a moth trap in the palace grounds which captured various species including elephant hawk-moths and buff-tip moths, all released afterward.

Studies show a 33% decrease in moth numbers since 1968, with certain species experiencing more severe declines. Efforts to create moth-friendly habitats involve promoting native wildflowers and grasses that caterpillars feed on, as well as maintaining areas with long grass and wood for resting.

Waters noted that protecting moths also helps sustain bird populations as moth caterpillars are a critical food source. Conservation strategies emphasize planting a mix of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, as well as delaying lawn mowing to provide a conducive environment for moths and other wildlife.

### Conservationists Urge Gardeners to Delay Lawn Mowing

Conservationists and wildlife experts, including Sir David Attenborough, are advising gardeners in the UK to delay mowing their lawns until July 15. This recommendation aims to preserve insect populations, such as bees and butterflies, that rely on long grass for breeding and pollination.

Failure to adhere to this mowing schedule can result in the loss of these vital insects and consequently disrupt the ecosystem. Wildlife organization Plantlife reported a 97% loss of flower-rich meadows since the 1930s, which has affected pollinator food sources. They argue that even small garden patches can significantly benefit biodiversity if managed properly.

Attenborough’s recent documentary, "Wild Isles," highlighted the importance of traditional hay meadows and the timing of conservation efforts, urging that delaying mowing until mid-July is crucial for allowing birds and insects to complete their breeding cycles and for flowers to set seed.