**Butterfly & Moth Links/Spectacular Nature**

Two web-sites for butterflies and moths with very beautiful photos and much interesting information:

[**https://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/**](https://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/)

<http://www.silkmoths.bizland.com/kirbywolfe.htm>

On the silkmoths web-site, be sure to share with your students the following: gloriously exotic moon moths, all closely related to our native Luna Moth (*Actias luna*): *Actias dubernardi*, *Actias maenas*, *Actias selene*, *Argema mittrei* (Comet Moth) & *Graellsia isabelae* (Stained-Glass Moth); the giants, *Archaeoattacus edwardsii*, *Attacus caesar* & *Attacus lorquini*; the striking pink *Eochroa trimini* from southern Africa.

**Have the students pick a favorite butterfly or moth and write a bit about it.**

**Spectacular Long Island/NJ Caterpillars (search on internet, many great photos)**

1. **Hickory Horned Devil** – caterpillar of the Regal Moth, our largest caterpillar up to 6 inches in length, looks fearsome to deter predators but is harmless.
2. **Saddleback Caterpillar –** a Slug Caterpillar (Slug Caterpillar Moths) with stinging venomous spines.
3. **Hag Moth Caterpillar** **or Monkey Slug** – another Slug Caterpillar, once thought to possess stinging hairs but shown to be harmless except perhaps for individuals with allergic reactions.
4. **Banded Woolly Bear** – familiar caterpillar. Contrary to myth, the widths of the brown and black bands do not indicate how cold the winter will be. Adult is the less familiar Isabella Tiger Moth.
5. **Milkweed Tussock Moth Caterpillar –** feeds on milkweed like Monarch caterpillars.
6. **Spicebush & Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Caterpillars** – late instars mimic snakes. Much less often seen than the common adults.
7. **Puss Caterpillar –** is not found in LI (possibly in NJ) but is mainly from the southern US and further south. Puss is for pussy cat but hidden among the luxuriant 'fur' of this cute caterpillar are numerous hollow venomous spines that account for it being the most poisonous of our US caterpillars. The adult is the attractive Southern Flannel Moth.

**Camouflage –** when an animal blends with its environment to avoid detection. Prey animals blend in to avoid detection from their predators; predators use camouflage so their prey is unaware of their presence. Generally, butterflies are camouflaged on their undersides because they rest with their wings closed; moths are camouflaged on their uppersides because they rest with their wings open.

**Protective Resemblance –** a form of camouflage, perhaps the best form, where an animal resembles a natural object such as a leaf, twig, flower, stone, tree bark, seaweed, … A stone fish resembles a stone, a stick insect looks like a stick, a Dead Leaf Butterfly looks like …

1. **Dead Leaf Butterfly –** several species of the genus *Kallima* from southeast Asia,where the underside, which shows when resting, has a remarkable resemblance to dead leaves. The genus *Consul* found from Mexico to the Amazon, also have undersides with incredible dead leaf similarity. Even more spectacular in resemblance quality from the Amazon is the **Magnificent** **Leafwing**, *Coenophlebia archidona*.
2. **Ghost Mantis –** a small praying mantis from Africa camouflaged as to resemble dead leaves.
3. **Orchid Mantis –** an amazing praying mantis from southeast Asian rainforests that resembles a white and pink orchid. Other flower mantises that are less flower-like but equally spectacular are the **Gemmed Flower Mantis** and the the **African Giant Devils Mantis**.

 **Mimicry** – when an animal copies another animal (or part of the animal) to fool its enemies. The mimicry is often both physical and behavioral. A famous mimicry involving butterflies (and moths) concerns non-poisonous species looking and behaving similar, often very similar, to their poisonous models.

1. **Owl Butterflies –** very large butterflies from Mexico through S. America with huge eye spots on their hindwings' underside; probable function is to startle/intimidate predators, especially birds, by making them appear to be a larger animal. They rest with their wings closed so appear most like an owl when their wings are spread in museum/collection specimens. True Owl Butterflies of the genus *Caligo* number about 20 species.
2. **Viceroy –** a mimic of the poisonous/distasteful Monarch. The Viceroy is smaller and with a black line on the hindwings that Monarchs lack; even though it is a mimic of the Monarch, it is now thought by scientists to also be distasteful to birds. Rare on LI.
3. **Snake Mimic Caterpillar –** though the Spicebush Swallowtail caterpillar is a striking snake mimic, it can't compare to the unbelievable Snake Mimic Caterpillar, *Hemeroplanes triptomelus*; from Central America, the adult is a sphinx or hawkmoth.
4. **Peanut-Headed Bug –** a giant leafhopper up to 3.5 inches long and with a wingspan up to 6 inches, it is found from Mexico to S. America. Mimicry exhibited by both its large protuberance on its head and large eyespots on its wings. What does the head resemble?!
5. **Mimic Octopus –** probably the most amazing mimic of all! **Must see short videos on the internet!**