

Eastern Tiger  
**SWALLOWTAIL**  
Butterfly  
*Papilio glaucus*



Wingspan: 3.5" - 5"

**S**ome of our largest and most colorful butterflies, swallowtails get their name from the tail-like elongation of the hind wing. In New York, the eastern tiger swallowtail is the species most often encountered by people. It prefers open areas, but can often be observed "mudpuddling" by the dozens at road and stream-side seeps. The adults are drawn to these areas to collect the sodium (salt) ions that accumulate on the water's surface. Since swallowtails feed on plant nectar where sodium is in short supply, they seek out sodium-rich areas. Swallowtail caterpillars feed on a variety of tree species, especially birch, alder and cherry. To discourage predators, these caterpillars can release a noxious odor from a gland in their prothorax (the portion of the middle section of the body closest to the head).



**LUNA** Moth  
*Actias luna*

Wingspan: 4" - 5"

**A** large, beautiful, light green moth, the luna is only found in North America. Thought to be a rarity, it is actually quite common in New York State. It thrives in areas where hickories dominate, but also does well in birch stands. Nocturnal, it is readily attracted to ultra-violet light (such as a "bug zapper"), and is most often seen near a porch light or outside a lighted window. The luna is a member of the giant silk moth family, and is striking in appearance with two long "tails"—one on each hind wing. Like its cousin the cecropia, the adult luna lacks active mouth parts and so does not feed. The luna caterpillar is large, fat and green with a yellow stripe on each side. It eats leaves from a wide variety of tree and shrub species. The caterpillar spins a thin cocoon, which may incorporate a leaf for camouflage.

## Is that a **BUTTERFLY** or a **MOTH**?

**T**here is no simple foolproof way to distinguish between butterflies and moths. One popular notion is that moths are duller than butterflies. Unfortunately, this is not a reliable method of distinguishing between the two since there are some very bright moths and some dull butterflies. However, while telling the two apart can be tricky, as a general rule butterflies and moths can be distinguished from each other by looking at the following four items: antenna shape, how their wings look at rest, wing color, and the time of day you see them.

**Wing Color** - Many butterflies are brightly colored. Many moths are drab or dull shades of brown.

**Wings at Rest** - Butterfly wings fold upright above their bodies. Moth wings often stretch out flat or fold back over their bodies.

**Antennae Shape** - Butterflies have long, thin, knob-tipped antennae. Moth antennae are feathery or tapered.

**Time of Day** - Butterflies are active by day (diurnal). Many moths move about at night (nocturnal).

