

How to Take Identifiable Photos of Butterflies & Moths for iNaturalist.ca

1

The most identifiable photo of a butterfly or moth is usually an **overhead photo of their open wings**. This highlights any distinctive markings and colour as well as shows the overall shape. Be careful as butterflies can be spooked by shadows and remember to use a **digital camera** if you have one.

2

If photographing larvae, try to get any **colours and markings** in focus.

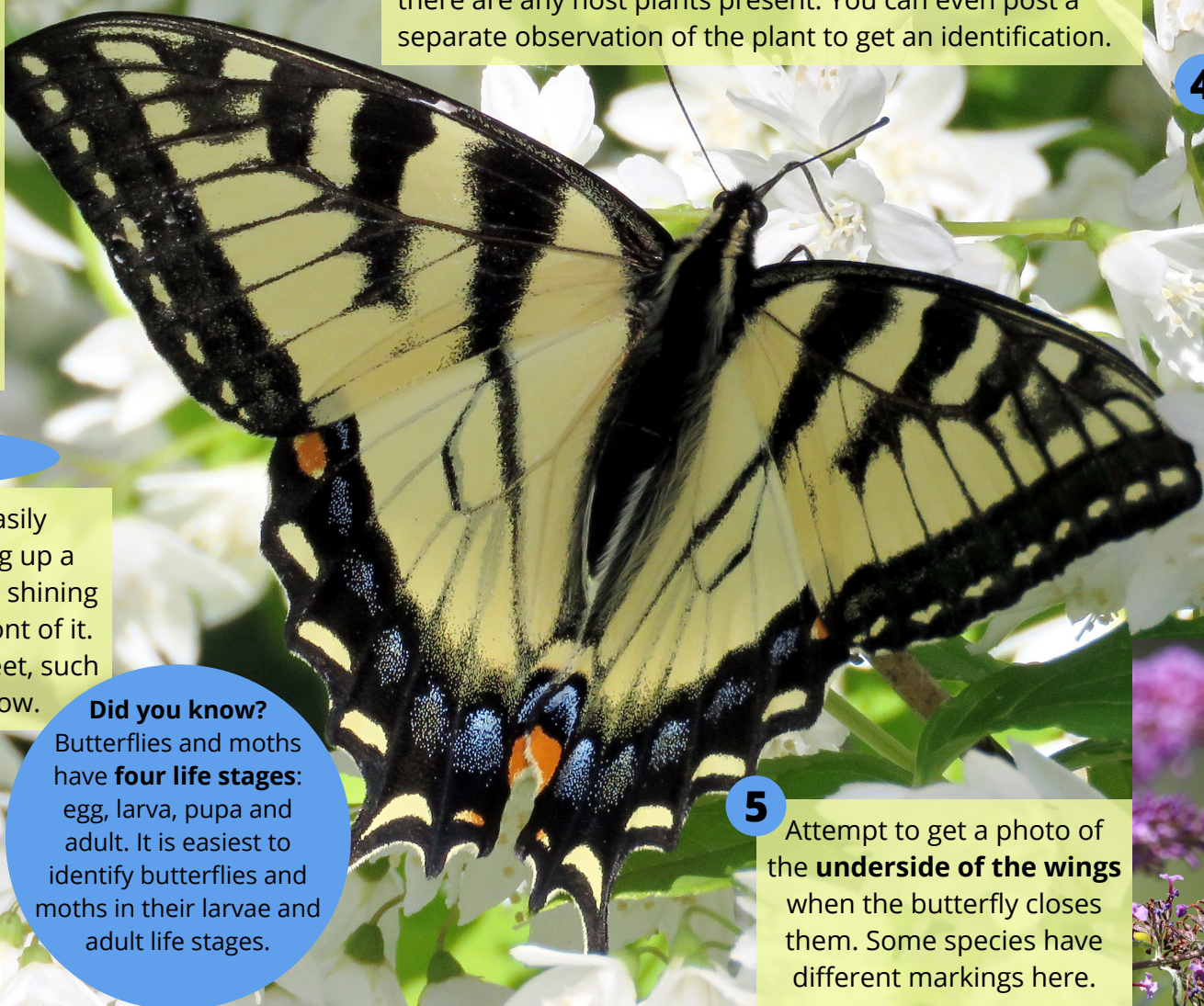


3

It is also helpful to take a photo or write in the notes section about the **surrounding habitat** to help others understand the approximate size of the organism and if there are any host plants present. You can even post a separate observation of the plant to get an identification.

4

Chrysalis' and cocoons are usually found in a safe secluded spot such as under a leaf or branch. They are usually well camouflaged with their surroundings. Take **multiple photos from different angles** to help others identify.



Pro Tip

Moths can be more easily photographed by putting up a **white sheet at night** and shining a bright light (or UV) in front of it. Moths will land on the sheet, such as the Luna Moth below.



Did you know? Butterflies and moths have **four life stages**: egg, larva, pupa and adult. It is easiest to identify butterflies and moths in their larvae and adult life stages.

5

Attempt to get a photo of the **underside of the wings** when the butterfly closes them. Some species have different markings here.



It can be difficult to take photos of wildlife. It is not essential to photograph every point on this diagram to get an identifiable observation. Just try your best! Both butterflies and moths can be pollinators as well as food for other species, such as birds and bats. Some species cocoon over winter in fallen leaves. Why not leave the leaves this fall to help wildlife?