



DISCOVERING THE BUTTERFLY WORLD

Butterfly Identification: families and resources

Differences between butterflies and moths

In culture and taxonomy, two main categories of Lepidoptera are distinguished:

mariposa – polilla

farfalle – falene

butterfly – moth

schmetterling – motte

πεταλούδα – σκώρος





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Butterfly

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Moth

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Moth

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Moth

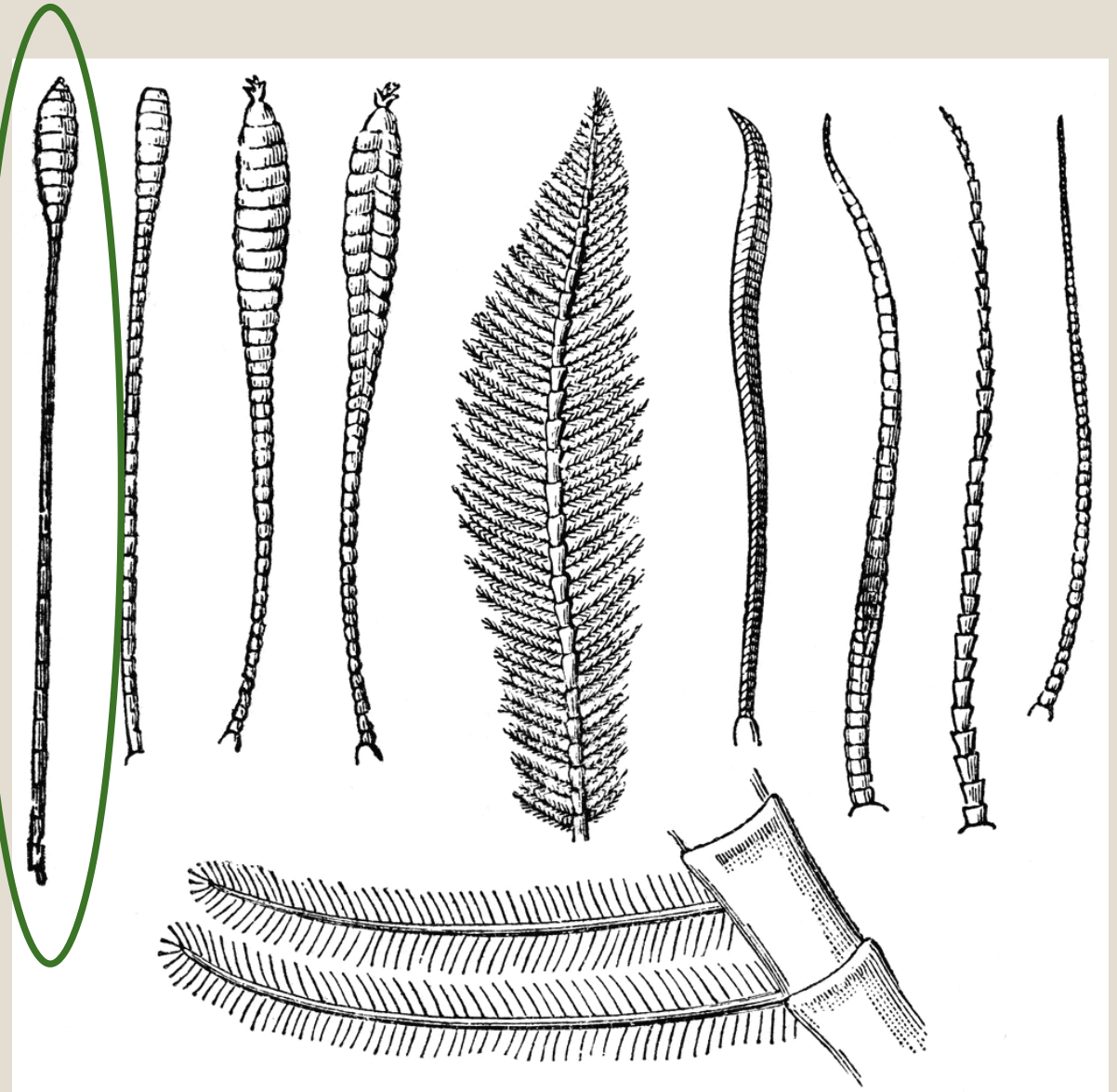
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Butterflies and Moths

Taxonomists have been searching for decades for an unique character that can distinguish butterflies and moths.

The only character that has been recognized was the shape of the antennae, which only in butterflies show a typically elongated shape ending in a mace, while in moths the antennae take many other shapes, except for this one. For this reason, Lepidoptera had been divided into:

- **Rhopalocera/Butterflies** (antennae with mace)
- **Heterocera/Moths** (antennae with other shapes)



Hazlitt Alva Cuppy PH.D., Editor Beauties and Wonders of Land and Sea (Springfield, OH: Mast, Crowell & Kirkpatrick, 1895)