

ASSEMBLY, No. 4338

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 7, 2015

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman NANCY J. PINKIN

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Designates Io moth as State Moth.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT designating the Io moth as the New Jersey State Moth, and
2 supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.
3

4 **WHEREAS**, The Io moth (*Automeris io*), which is native to New
5 Jersey, is one of the most recognizable and visually striking moths
6 in North America; and

7 **WHEREAS**, These large silk moths vary in color from reddish brown to
8 bright yellow, but all Io moths are characterized by large black and
9 white eyespots in the middle of their hindwings; and

10 **WHEREAS**, When threatened, Io moths flip their forewings forward,
11 exposing the eyespots, which resemble the glint of vertebrate eyes,
12 and have been known to startle predatory birds; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Io moths can be spotted in farms, forests, gardens, and
14 suburban areas throughout the State primarily between the months
15 of May and June, when female adult Io moths lay their eggs; and

16 **WHEREAS**, The Io moth's bright green caterpillar may be found on a
17 variety of native New Jersey plants, including hackberry, willow,
18 redbud, currant, blackberry, and pear, though they are generally
19 considered nondestructive to crops; and

20 **WHEREAS**, Io moths, and moths generally, are critical parts of the
21 ecosystem, providing food for a variety of species such as birds,
22 mammals, spiders, and insects; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Although moths typically have a reputation for being
24 pests, only a very small percentage cause trouble to humans, and
25 most either have no impact on humans or serve important
26 ecosystem functions such as pollination; and

27 **WHEREAS**, Like butterflies, moths are an important indicator species,
28 meaning their numbers can give us vital clues to changes in our
29 environment, such as the effects of new farming practices, air
30 pollution, and climate change; and

31 **WHEREAS**, According to the International Union for Conservation of
32 Nature, over the past 40 years, the number of moth species has
33 declined globally, warranting increased attention to these often-
34 overlooked insects; and

35 **WHEREAS**, By designating a State Moth, New Jersey recognizes the
36 vital role played by moths in the health of our ecosystem, and hopes
37 to promote further interest in, and research of, moths; and

38 **WHEREAS**, In addition, National Moth Week, which was founded in
39 New Jersey and is coordinated by Friends of the East Brunswick
40 Environmental Commission, celebrates the beauty, lifecycles, and
41 habitats of moths, and will be held this year from July 18 to 26; and

42 **WHEREAS**, National Moth Week encourages people of all ages to learn
43 about, observe, and document moths, such as the beautiful Io, in
44 their backyards, parks, and neighborhoods; and

45 **WHEREAS**, Residents can participate in National Moth Week by
46 joining one of many planned excursions and events hosted by local
47 environmental organizations, or by simply observing moths in their
48 own backyards and under porch lights; and

1 **WHEREAS**, As the symbol of National Moth Week, and a beautiful,
2 native New Jersey moth species, the Io moth is a fitting and proper
3 choice as the New Jersey State Moth; now, therefore,
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*
7

8 1. The Io moth (*Automeris io*) is designated as the New Jersey
9 State Moth.
10

11 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
12
13

14 STATEMENT
15

16 This bill would designate the Io moth as the New Jersey State
17 Moth.

18 The Io moth, which is native to New Jersey, is one of the most
19 recognizable and visually striking moths in North America. Though
20 they vary in color from reddish brown to bright yellow, all Io moths
21 are characterized by large black and white eyespots in the middle of
22 their hindwings, which the moths use to ward off predators. Io
23 moths can be spotted in farms, forests, gardens, and urban areas
24 throughout the State on native plants such as hackberry, willow,
25 redbud, currant, blackberry, and pear. They are generally
26 considered nondestructive to crops, and play an important role in
27 the ecosystem by serving as a food source to birds, mammals,
28 spiders, and insects.

29 Although moths typically have a reputation for being pests, only
30 a small percentage cause trouble to humans, and most serve
31 important ecosystem functions such as pollination. In addition,
32 moths, like butterflies, are an important indicator species, meaning
33 their numbers can give us vital clues to changes in our environment,
34 such as the effects of new farming practices, air pollution, and
35 climate change. However, according to the International Union for
36 Conservation of Nature, over the past 40 years, the number of moth
37 species has declined globally, warranting increased attention to
38 these often-overlooked insects.

39 By designating a State Moth, New Jersey recognizes the vital
40 role played by moths in the health of our ecosystem, and hopes to
41 promote further interest in, and research of, moths.