

BOGONG MOTHS IN WILLOW TREE!

On 15th April, 30 or so Bogong moths visited my house in Willow Tree – clustering at the kitchen and laundry windows. I've lived in the area for 15 years and have never seen these numbers before!



Current information on the Bogong moth:

- First Nations people from the Dhudhuroa Nation of North Eastern Victoria named this moth.
- Scientific name: *Agrotis infusa*
- Population: Bogong moths are declining in numbers and have recently been listed as endangered to an international red list of threatened species.
- Bogong moth populations have been declining since the 1980s.

Why is the population of the Bogong Moth declining?

- Bogong Moths have migrated from their winter breeding grounds throughout Queensland, New South Wales and western Victoria, to the Victorian Alpine region, for more than 7,000 years - a known ecological phenomenon.
- Previously Bogong moths migrated in the billions. After spending the summer in the cooler mountain caves, they return to their birthplace to reproduce over winter: new larvae again growing under the soil from plant roots and other plant matter.
- In 2017 and 2019 there was a crash in numbers because of drought in regions where moth larvae grow: leaving them without the nutrients from plants. In some caves, where Bogong moths once lined the walls in their thousands, there are now none, despite a carpet of moth bodies 1.5 metres thick on the floor built up from thousands of generations.

Can we help stop the Bogong Moth decline? YES!!!!

- On the eve of the moth's spring migration, Zoos Victoria is calling on south-eastern Australians along the flight path of the Bogong Moth to turn off any unnecessary outdoor lighting that may be interrupting the moths from their traditional migration.
- It is thought that as moths use both the Earth's magnetic field and visual cues on the horizon to navigate their way, light pollution from urban centres can 'trap' the moths and hinder them from continuing their journey.
- This simple action will also help to save one of the nation's most adorable, but critically endangered species - the Mountain Pygmy-possum.
- The country's only hibernating marsupial is at risk of starvation after its main food source, the migrating Bogong Moth, failed to appear in the possums' Victorian Alps home for the second year in a row.
- Bogong moths also provide critical food for the critically endangered Mountain pygmy possum, lizards, antechinus (broad-toothed rat) and spiders across the Snowy Mountain region.
- Commencing September 1, Lights Off for Moths is a very public attempt to avert a crisis for the 2,000 remaining Mountain Pygmy-possums in the wild.
- Zoos Victoria has also created a citizen science platform, **Moth Tracker** which empowers anyone, anywhere to record a Bogong Moth sighting.

So – if you see some Bogong Moths – please google and use the Moth Tracker – I logged mine in!