

Bottlebrush & Bogong Moths

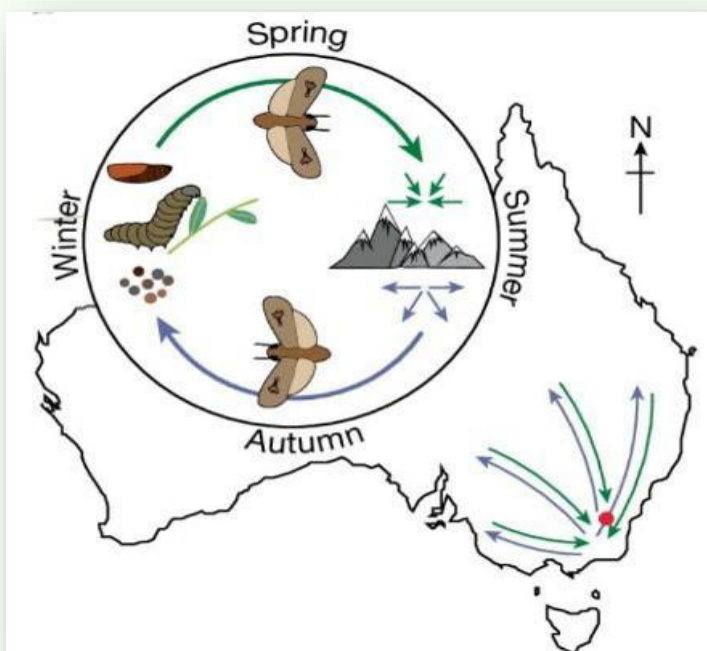


Bogong Moth, *Agrotis infusa*, on
Crimson Bottlebrush, *Callistemon citrinus*

Sydney has been inundated with Bogong Moths in recent weeks, more than we have seen for many years. Their arrival has coincided with spectacular seasonal flowering of Bottlebrush (*Callistemon*), Tea Tree (*Leptospermum*) and *Grevillea*.

Bogong Moths (*Agrotis infusa*) are quite remarkable, famous for their long-distance seasonal migrations to and from the Australian Alps. In autumn and winter, they breed in southern Queensland, western New South

Wales and Victoria. Their spring migration from their breeding sites on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range to specific peaks above 1,500 metres of high mountain ranges of south-eastern Australia beggars belief. Their destinations include the Bogong High Plains, Mount Bogong and Mount Hotham in Victoria, Snowy Mountains in Kosciuszko National Park, NSW, and the Brindabella Ranges in



Seasonal migration routes of Bogong Moths.

Dreyer, Adden, Chen et al. *Nature* 2025.

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the ACT. Rather than moving to warmer regions to *escape the cold*, Bogong Moths seek out the protection of the cooler temperatures of caves and crevices in the mountains to *escape from the extreme heat and arid conditions* of the western slopes and plains. This is known as *aestivation*. The moths may travel more than 1,000 kilometres to reach their destinations in the mountains.

In Autumn, the moths migrate back to their breeding grounds, although not all Bogong Moths are migratory, and where conditions are favourable, for example with cooler, milder conditions throughout summer, migration is not necessary.

Along their migratory routes, Bogong Moths use flowering shrubs such as bottlebrush (*Callistemon*) not only as a source of pollen and nectar, but also for protection from predators and shelter from extreme weather events during rest periods. Bogong Moths also play a significant role in pollination, and in addition to pollen from Bottlebrush, pollen from other Myrtaceae genera such as *Angophora* and *Eucalyptus*, *Leptospermum*, *Melaleuca* and *Kunzea*, has been found on the moths.



Eucalyptus sideroxylon, Mugga Ironbark



Angophora floribunda - Rough barked Apple



Kunzea capitata, Tick Bush





Pollen from other plant families visited by Bogong Moths include *Philotheca myoporoides* (Rutaceae) which is common in east coast bushland and frequently planted as a garden plant, also *Dodonaea* (Sapindaceae), *Pomaderris aspera* (Rhamnaceae), and grass *Poa* (Poaceae).

Bogong Moths are an important food source for Mountain Pygmy Possums, lizards and *Antechinus*.

If you have an abundance of Bogong Moths in your garden, it is unlikely they will feed on your garden plants other than forage for pollen and nectar. Most of their nutritional intake occurs when they are in larval stages.

Follow the migration of Bogong Moths using Zoos Victoria Bogong Moth Tracker:
<https://www.zoo.org.au/moth-tracker/>



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Australian Conservation Foundation:

<https://www.acf.org.au/our-work/nature/missing-wildlife/bogong-moth>

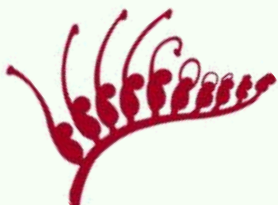
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Dreyer, D., Adden, A., Chen, H. et al. 2025. Bogong moths use a stellar compass for long-distance navigation at night. *Nature* 643, 994–1000.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-09135-3>

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Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogong_moth



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