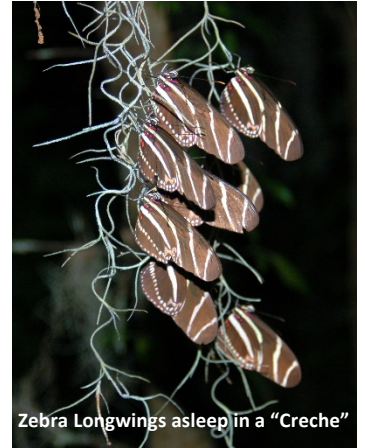


## How long do butterflies live?

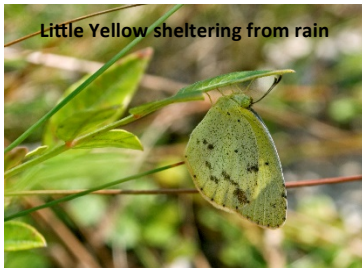
Generally, most butterflies live only a few weeks, and an average life span may be only about a week due to predation, parasites, bad weather and disease. Females tend to outlive males by a few days and larger butterflies usually outlive smaller species. The State Butterfly of Florida, the Zebra longwing has the longest continuously active lifespan (non-hibernating) and may live as long as six months.



## Do butterflies grow in size?

No. The size of the adult butterfly within a species is determined by the quality of nutrition the growing caterpillar was able to eat. You can find different sized butterflies in the same species, but all their growth took place in the caterpillar stage.

## What do butterflies do when it rains?



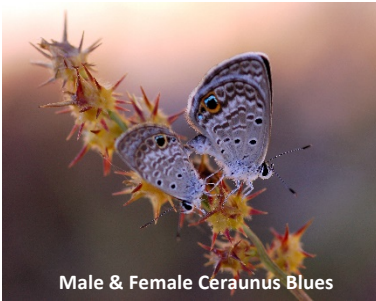
Just like us, butterflies seek shelter, usually under leaves or on twigs in the rain. An ideal time to photograph butterflies is early in the morning or just when the sun comes out after a rain, as many butterflies will sit and bask in the sun to regain the energy they need to be active.

## How do butterflies survive winter?

Butterflies enter a resting period that is somewhat like hibernation in mammals. This resting period is called **DIAPAUSE**, and during this time the butterfly does not eat, grow, or reproduce. Butterfly eggs and caterpillars also diapause and can remain in a resting state for months—sometimes until the following spring. In addition, some butterflies can produce a kind of antifreeze—chemicals in their body fluids that prevent ice crystals from forming in their cells by lowering their freezing points. Some butterflies of the same species are active all year in our area, while their northern cousins overwinter in the caterpillar stage.



## How can you tell a male from a female butterfly?



Male & Female Ceraunus Blues

This can be tricky. Some male butterflies have a dark scent patch on either hindwing (more easily seen from above) – but not every species has these spots. In general, the abdomen of a female butterfly or moth is fatter and appears to be shorter. Males have long slender abdomens. The vein pattern on male butterfly wings is thinner than the female. These are not easy observations to make!

## Can butterflies hear?

Possibly. Specialized organs at the base of the wings and tops of the legs can sense vibrations that may warn the butterfly of a disturbance nearby.

## How can you tell a butterfly from a moth?

Scientists believe that butterflies evolved from day-flying moths more than 60 million years ago. There are several general rules (with exceptions!) that separate butterflies from moths. In most but not all species, butterflies are **DIURNAL** or active during daylight, while moths are more often **NOCTURNAL** or active at night. Butterflies usually have “clubs” on the tips of their antennae, and most but not all moths have feathery antennae, most prominent in the males. Butterflies generally locate their mates visually, while female moths produce **PHEROMONE** chemicals that males detect with their antennae – sometimes from miles away. Also, the butterfly forewing and hindwing is not joined together as moth wings usually are, which explains why butterflies are able to land more gracefully than the crash landings seen in many moths. Moth species outnumber butterflies by nearly 10 to 1.



Cecropia Moth

## Are butterflies poisonous and can they bite?

Adult butterflies of some species can be toxic when eaten, due to the plant toxins they ingest. Touching a butterfly will not harm you but will likely injure the delicate body and wings of the butterfly, so avoid touching butterflies. There are no stinging butterfly caterpillars in Florida, but there are several stinging moth caterpillars in Florida to avoid like the Saddleback moth caterpillar. No, butterflies cannot bite. They ingest their food – usually nectar from flowers through their **PROBOSCIS**, similar to the way we use a straw. Butterflies also like to eat mud, carrion, sap and rotting fruit or other vegetation.



Saddleback Caterpillar

## How many species of butterflies live in Florida?

There are about 18,000 species of butterflies worldwide. In Florida there are approximately 200 species that either live and breed here or migrate through the state.