

Science **STORIES!**



W.K. Kellogg
Biological Station
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

kbs.msu.edu

ALICE PUCHALSKY

Ph.D. student

*W.K. Kellogg Biological Station
Michigan State University*

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

I'm a Lepidopterist and an ecologist. Lepidopterists are scientists who study moths and butterflies. Ecologists are scientists who study the relationships between living things and the relationships between living things and their environment.



HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR WAY TO THIS CAREER PATH?

In college, I majored in environmental science. I also got the opportunity to do research with an ecology professor. Under the mentorship of this professor, I did research on bats with a disease called white-nose syndrome. During this experience, I learned that I liked doing research and wanted to ask my own questions. Later, I got the experience to do field research on a rare butterfly species. I became fascinated by butterflies and moths and wanted to learn more about them. After graduating college, I applied to graduate school programs where I would be able to do research on moths and butterflies.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE FOR YOU?

My "typical day" changes with the seasons. During the fall, winter and spring, I spend most of my time planning for my next field season. This could involve reading papers and coming up with research questions, talking to other scientists about the methods they have used, or writing proposals. I also spend some time doing statistical analyses on the data that I collected in previous field seasons as well as in the laboratory, processing samples that I collected the previous summer. During the summer, I spend more time collecting data! As someone who researches moths, this involves a lot of late-night moth collecting! During the summer, I also do some planning, lab work and data analyses, too.

"It's research like mine that informs the conservation of moths and butterflies."

**CONNECT
WITH ALICE:**

Twitter: @AlicePuchalsky