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Mothman

For other uses, see [Mothman \(disambiguation\)](#).

Mothman is a moth-like creature reportedly seen in the Point Pleasant area of West Virginia from November 15, 1966 to December 15, 1967. The first newspaper report was published in the *Point Pleasant Register* dated November 16, 1966, titled “Couples See Man-Sized Bird...Creature...Something”.^[1]

Mothman was introduced to a wider audience by Gray Barker in 1970,^{[2][3]} later popularized by John Keel in his 1975 book *The Mothman Prophecies*, claiming that Mothman was related to a wide array of supernatural events in the area and the collapse of the Silver Bridge. The 2002 film *The Mothman Prophecies*, starring Richard Gere, was based on Keel's book.^[4]

1 History

On November 12, 1966, five men who were digging a grave at a cemetery near Clendenin, WV claimed to see a man-like figure fly low from the trees over their heads.^[5] This is often identified as the first known sighting of what became known as the Mothman.

Shortly thereafter, on November 15, 1966, two young couples from Point Pleasant, Roger and Linda Scarberry, and Steve and Mary Mallette told police they saw a large white creature whose eyes “glowed red” when the car headlights picked it up. They described it as a “large flying man with ten-foot wings following their car while they were driving in an area outside of town known as ‘the TNT area’, the site of a former World War II munitions plant.”^{[6][7]}

During the next few days, other people reported similar sightings. Two volunteer firemen who sighted it said it was a “large bird with red eyes”. Mason County Sheriff George Johnson commented that he believed the sightings were due to an unusually large heron he termed a “shitepoke”. Contractor Newell Partridge told Johnson that when he aimed a flashlight at a creature in a nearby field its eyes glowed “like bicycle reflectors”, and blamed buzzing noises from his television set and the disappearance of his German Shepherd dog on the creature.^[8] Wildlife biologist Dr. Robert L. Smith at West Virginia University told reporters that descriptions and sightings all fit the sandhill crane, a large American crane almost as high as a man with a seven foot wingspan featuring circles of reddish coloring around the eyes, and that the bird

may have wandered out of its migration route.

There were no Mothman reports in the immediate aftermath of the December 15, 1967 collapse of the Silver Bridge and the death of 46 people,^[9] giving rise to legends that the Mothman sightings and the bridge collapse were connected.^{[8][10][11]}

Folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand notes that Mothman has been widely covered in the popular press, some claiming sightings connected with UFOs, and others claiming that a military storage site was Mothman's “home”. Brunvand notes that recountings of the 1966-67 Mothman reports usually state that at least 100 people saw Mothman with many more “afraid to report their sightings” but observed that written sources for such stories consisted of children's books or sensationalized or undocumented accounts that fail to quote identifiable persons. Brunvand found elements in common among many Mothman reports and much older folk tales, suggesting that something real may have triggered the scares and became woven with existing folklore. He also records anecdotal tales of Mothman supposedly attacking the roofs of parked cars inhabited by teenagers.^[12]

1.1 Claims of later sightings

Ufologist Jerome Clark writes that many years after the initial events, members of the Ohio UFO Investigators League re-interviewed several people who claimed to have seen Mothman, all of whom insisted their stories were accurate. Linda Scarberry claimed that she and her husband had seen Mothman “hundreds of times,” sometimes at close range, commenting, “It seems like it doesn't want to hurt you. It just wants to communicate with you.”^[13]

Cryptozoologist Loren Coleman claims that sightings of Mothman continue and told USA Today he re-interviewed witnesses described in Keel's book who said Mothman was “a huge creature about 7 feet tall with huge wings and red eyes” and that “they could see the creature flapping right behind them” as they fled from it.^[14]

2 Explanations

2.1 Paranormal

Some ufologists, paranormal authors, and cryptozoologists believe that Mothman was an alien,

a supernatural manifestation, or an unknown cryptid. In his 1975 book *The Mothman Prophecies*, author John Keel claimed that the Point Pleasant residents experienced precognitions including premonitions of the collapse of the Silver Bridge, unidentified flying object sightings, visits from inhuman or threatening men in black, and other bizarre phenomena. Mothman was supposedly seen a month before the destruction of the Twin Towers and six hours before the I-35W bridge collapsed. However, Keel has been criticized for distorting established data, and for gullibility.^[13]

2.2 Skepticism

Skeptic Joe Nickell says that a number of hoaxes followed the publicity generated by the original reports, such as a group of construction workers who tied flashlights to helium balloons. Nickell attributes the Mothman reports to pranks, misidentified planes, and sightings of a barred owl, an albino owl, suggesting that the Mothman's "glowing eyes" were actually red-eye effect caused from the reflection of light from flashlights or other bright light sources. The area lies outside the snowy owl's usual range and locals, unfamiliar with such a large owl, could have misidentified the bird.^[6]

3 Festivals and statue

Point Pleasant held its first Annual Mothman Festival in 2002 and a 12-foot-tall metallic statue of the creature, created by artist and sculptor Bob Roach, was unveiled in 2003. The Mothman Museum and Research Center opened in 2005 and is run by Jeff Wamsley.^{[15][16][17]} The Festival is a weekend-long event held on the 3rd weekend of every September. There are a variety of events that go on during the festival such as guest speakers, vendor exhibits, a mothman pancake eating contest, and hayride tours focusing on the notable areas of Point Pleasant.^[10]

4 Popular culture

- In season five, episode four of *The X-Files*, "Detour", Agent Mulder hypothesizes that the supernatural events occurring may be related to a group of creatures called the Mothmen.
- In episode two of the short-lived TV series *X-Testers*, the researchers attempted to duplicate alleged photographs of Mothman.^[18]
- In the video game *Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow*, Mothman is one of three cryptozoology-based monsters along with the Yeti and the "Flying Humanoid". It appears again as an enemy in *Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin*.

- Mothman is a recurring demon in the *Shin Megami Tensei* franchise.
- Paranormal investigator Dib from *Invader Zim* goes by the alias 'Agent Mothman.'
- The Italian independent hardcore punk band *Ekidna Orgy* dedicated to Mothman a song of the same name.
- *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002)
- *Mothman* (2010), a Syfy original movie
- In the French novel "Les yeux de l'épouvante" ("The eyes of the terror") written by Jimmy Guieu in 1977 (and published at "éditions Fleuve Noir"), the Mothman appears as character, clearly named like this (especially into the chapter 7). But in this book, he appears in France, in Var, near the Malmont. The title of the novel "The eyes of the terror" is directly about the dreadful red eyes of the Mothman.
- The comic book series *The Perhapanauts* features a Mothman named Karl as one of the main characters.
- The Moth, a character from *SpongeBob SquarePants*, represents Mothman.
- In season one, episode five of *Mountain Monsters*, the crew of expert hunters and trappers attempt to capture the Mothman of Mason County, WV.^[19]
- "Red Eyes", a song by Hawthorne Heights frontman JT Woodruff from his 2014 solo album, *Field Medicine*, is reportedly about The Mothman.
- In the *Ben 10: Alien Force*, *Ben 10: Ultimate Alien*, and *Ben 10: Omniverse* cartoon series, Big Chill, one of Ben's aliens of the Necrofriggian race, represents Mothman in body structure, eyes, and some parts of design.
- Mattel's *Monster High* doll series has a hybrid character called Bonita Femur; her mother is a skeleton and her father is the Mothman. She features in the *Monster High Movie* "Freaky Fusion"
- Kenkou Cross' *Monster Girl Encyclopedia* has a Mamono (Monster Girl) based off of the Mothman.
- Killer Moth of DC Nation may have been inspired from the Mothman.

4.1 Books

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5 See also

- Apparitional experience
- Flatwoods monster
- Owlman
- Spring-Heeled Jack

6 References

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7 External links

- Skeptoid Podcast

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8.1 Text

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