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Rare Moth Sighted on Kamchatka

By The Moscow Times

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The blue underwing receives its name from its bright-blue coloring, which it reveals when threatened or attacked but which is normally hidden beneath dull outer wings.

A volunteer has captured on camera an endangered moth rarely sighted on Kamchatka, one of the peninsula's nature reserves said.

The moth, known as the blue underwing, is the largest species of moth found on Kamchatka and had only been seen on the peninsula once previously.

On Tuesday, the Kronotsky nature reserve said in a statement that volunteer Irina Vasiliga snapped the moth while taking part in a photo competition to catalog the reserve's fauna.

"I saw the moth sitting on the window frame — it was flying toward the light. I've never seen such a large insect in all my life, it was roughly the size of a man's palm," Vasiliga said.

A senior researcher on the nature reserve was thrilled when she saw the pictures and rushed to send them to a colleague at Moscow State University. Her colleague confirmed that Vasiliga

had photographed the blue underwing, a nocturnal insect listed in Russia's Red Book of endangered species.

The moth receives its name from its bright-blue coloring, which it reveals when threatened or attacked but which is normally hidden beneath dull outer wings for camouflage.

It is principally nocturnal, and its wing span can reach 10 centimeters.

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