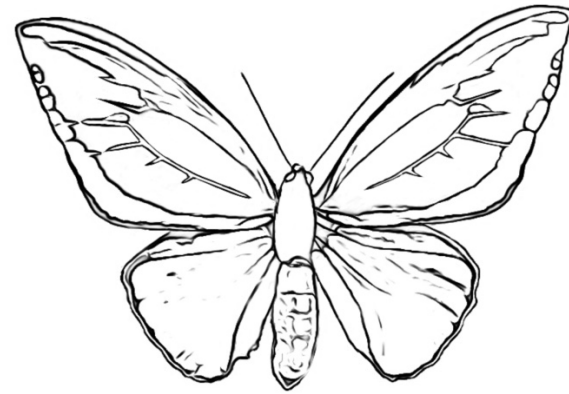
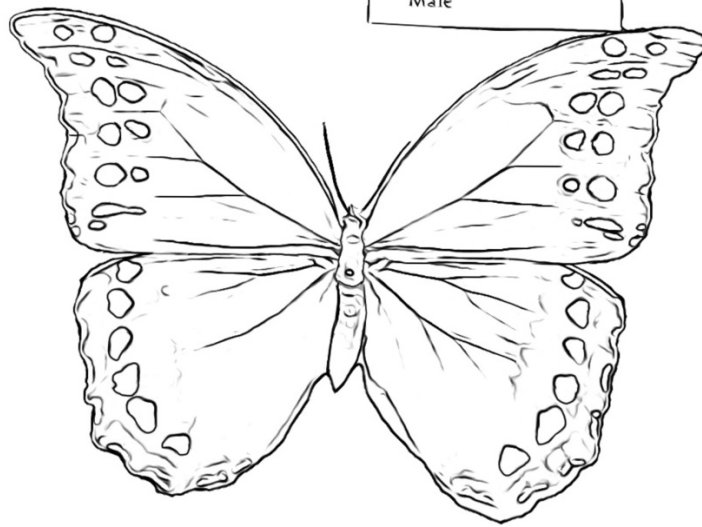


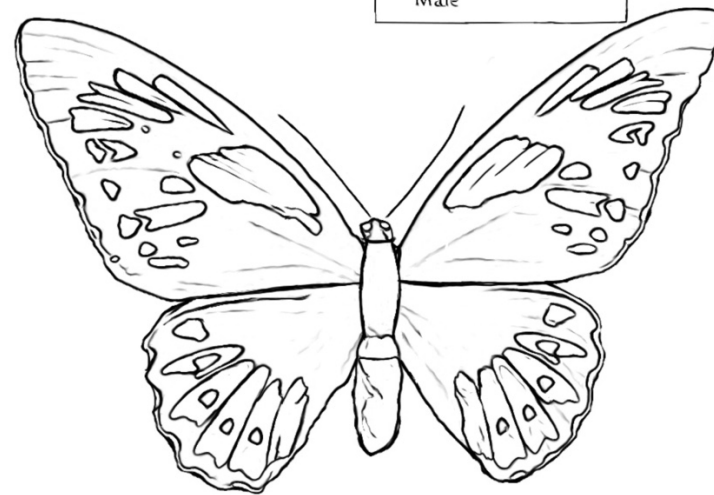
Blue Morpho
Morpho didius
Male



Birdwing Butterfly
Troides priamus
Male



Blue Morpho
Morpho didius
Female



Birdwing Butterfly
Troides priamus
Female

Butterfly
Dimorphism



Top Left: Blue morpho (*Morpho didius*), male
 Bottom Left: Blue morpho (*Morpho didius*), female
 Top Right: Birdwing butterfly (*Troides priamus*), male
 Bottom Right: Birdwing butterfly (*Troides priamus*), female

Butterfly Dimorphism

Museum of Comparative Zoology

These four butterflies were previously on display in the exhibit [Language of Color](#). Additional specimens are currently on view in the exhibit [Arthropods: Creatures that Rule](#) at the Harvard Museum of Natural History.

Male Blue Morpho and Birdwing Butterflies show much richer and brighter coloration on the backs of their wings than do females. Many butterflies show some sexual dimorphism or sex differences in color and pattern, but such strong differences are the exception rather than the rule among lepidopterans.

Brightly-colored male butterflies flash their colors to attract multiple female mates. Females, by contrast, are more selective in the choice of a mate to father their brood. Over time, their choices have influenced the evolution of bright colors and patterns in males. Recent experiments designed to examine female choice in some butterflies, have shown that females often prefer color characteristics, such as UV-reflective markings, that appear striking to a butterfly's eye, but are invisible to our own.

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