

Morpho butterflies float in the canopy

Morpho butterflies have adapted to a life floating in the canopy of the Amazon rainforest in various ways. This finding comes from research in Peru by the Experimental Zoology chair group, which was published in *Science*.

Most Morpho butterflies flutter about in the undergrowth but a few species live in the canopy. Images recorded by high-speed cameras show that they spend much more time floating. With the help of engineers specializing in fluid dynamics from the maritime research institute MARIN, the zoologists were able to create computer simulations of the butterflies' aerodynamic performance. In the course of evolution, the species that moved to live in the canopy adapted their flight and the shape of their wings to the new environment, each species in its own way. Some have narrower

wings while others have triangular wings. But the increased efficiency in their flight is the same.

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