



**Baltimore Woods
Nature Center**
Nature in your hands

Observing Fireflies

Looking for fireflies isn't just an activity for the kids, it's a fun way for anyone to spend a summer evening! Fireflies are actually beetles that use a chemical reaction in their abdomen to light up. Each species of firefly has its own light pattern and they use this light to communicate with each other and to find mates.

Try turning all of your lights off and heading outside to see if you can observe any fireflies. It may help to go to a local park or somewhere away from streetlights or other house lights. On the next page is a chart from the Massachusetts Audubon Society of common firefly species and their flash patterns. Try to identify the species of the fireflies you see!

Visit <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-involved/citizen-science/firefly-watch> to participate in the Firefly Watch Citizen Science Project with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Anyone can participate, all it takes is 10 minutes of firefly watching!

Firefly Watch



Also known as "lightning bugs," fireflies are neither bugs nor flies—they're actually beetles that light up using a chemical reaction in their lower abdomen (the bottom part of their body). Some of them light up in a specific blinking pattern, like a secret code that they use to "talk" with other fireflies and to find mates. Flashes be quick or long-lasting, and one kind is in a j-shape. Use the below chart to help identify the most common fireflies and report your sightings at massaudubon.org/fireflywatch.

Flash Patterns of Common Fireflies

