

## Bedstraw Hawk-moth *Hyles gallii* in Headless Cross, Redditch

Patrick Taylor.

I have been moth trapping in my garden in Redditch a couple of times a week this year (2021), using a basic Actinic trap. Despite being a relative beginner to "mothing" I am accumulating a surprisingly good list.

On Monday 2nd August 2021 I opened my blinds to reveal a large hawkmoth sitting on top of the trap. It clearly wasn't any species that I had seen before, so I quickly took a photo of it in-situ (01) before opening the books. To my amazement I had a Bedstraw Hawk-moth *Hyles gallii*. *The Moths of the West Midlands* (Simpson *et. al.* eds. 2020) describes this species as a 'rare migrant' with a Red-data Book status of 'Vulnerable' and yet here it was in my small, urban garden in Headless Cross.



01. Bedstraw Hawk-moth *Hyles gallii* Headless Cross 02.08.21.  
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It was a relatively cold morning so I expected the moth to be quite sluggish and I attempted to pick it up to get a better photo. Instead, it dived into the trap and started vibrating its wings before it flew vertically, made two circuits round the house at a height of at least 10 metres and disappeared at a speed I could barely comprehend: it has to be the fastest flying insect I have ever seen. I checked the identification several times before passing it to higher authorities who immediately confirmed it as a Bedstraw Hawk-moth.

I have trapped other hawk-moths including several Elephant Hawk-moths *Deilephila elpenor* and on 20th July I had trapped a Pine Hawk-moth *Sphinx pinastri*, another uncommon species in the Midlands, though by no means as rare as the Bedstraw Hawk-moth.

Within two metres of the trap, I have a large lily which has a very strong fragrance at night, and I was wondering whether this could be attracting the hawk-moths.

### Reference

Simpson, T., Duncan, I. & Williams, M. 2020. *The Moths of the West Midlands*. Pisces Publications, Berkshire.

### Images

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