

Death's Head Hawk Moth *Acherontia Atropos*

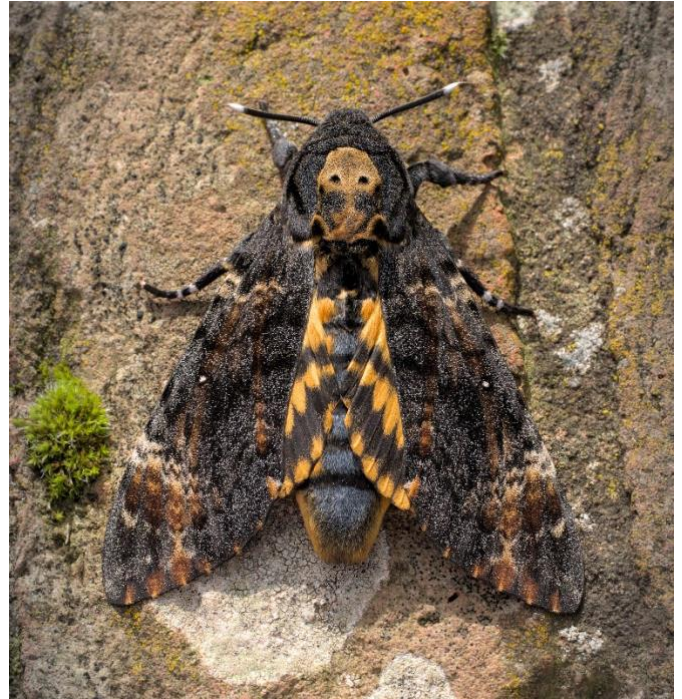
Tony Simpson



01. Death's Head Hawk Moth caterpillar 30.08.23. E.D. Butler.

On 30th August 2023 a larva of a Death's Head Hawk Moth *Acherontia atropos* (01) was found walking across the ground close to a potato patch in a garden near Droitwich. The owner of the garden contacted Wendy Carter at Worcestershire Wildlife Trust who asked me to go and collect it.

Its behaviour suggested it was dispersing to find a pupation site, as most of these larvae are when they are found, so at my suggestion it had been put in a container with some compost. By the next day it had buried itself in the compost to pupate. It did this successfully and the moth emerged on 14th October 2023 indoors. It was released later in south Worcestershire (02) but as yet this species cannot survive our winters outdoors so it is unlikely to survive. There have been a small number recorded in Worcestershire, almost always as larvae, in recent years, the progeny of migrating females from earlier in the year.



02. Death's Head Hawk Moth 20.10.23. Oliver Wadsworth.

Images

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