

# BIODIVERSITY on your Farm

The National Biodiversity Data Centre has set a challenge for farmers to record some of the amazing biodiversity found on your farm during the year. We have 40 species for you to record.

Are you up for the challenge?

## Species: Humming-bird Hawk-moth

Scientific Name: *Macroglossum stellatarum*

Irish name: Conach foluana

### Group

1 of the 1,475 moth species recorded in Ireland  
Over 570 species of macro moth in Ireland, the *Sphingidae* Hawkmoth family.

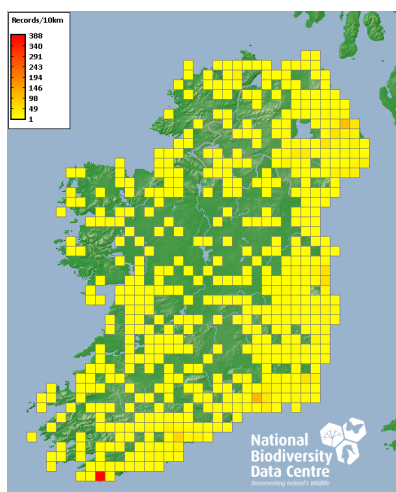
There are 14 resident and immigrant Hawkmoths in Ireland.

### How common on farms

Biodiversity surveys were carried out across 40 farms within the National Biodiversity Data Centre's 'Protecting Farmland Pollinators' EIP project (<https://biodiversityireland.ie/projects/protecting-farmland-pollinators/>). The 40 farms were chosen to reflect farms of differing types and intensity levels. The Humming-bird hawk-moth was recorded on one of the 40 farms.

### Distribution

Common migrant. They may hibernate as an adult in the southern counties.



Source: The Humming-bird Hawk-moth records as viewed on Biodiversity Maps, 2023.



@ Liam Lysaght

Humming-bird Hawk-moth. Note: Generally brown, hindwings are mainly orange. Hovers like a hummingbird.

### Identification Tips

- Wingspan 40 to 50mm.
- Generally brown with small white patches on the sides of the abdomen.
- Also a black bum (anal) tuft.
- The forewings are a dull brown with darker cross-lines.
- Hindwings are mainly orange.

### Biodiversity Tip No. 13

Plant a range of native species in your hedgerow, including honeysuckle.



## Conservation Status

Red Lists are an internationally recognised methodology for assessing conservation status. An Irish Macro-moths (*Lepidoptera*) Red List was published in 2016. The Humming-bird hawk-moth was 'Not Assessed' in the Red List.

Humming-bird Hawk-moths don't have an IUCN ranking, so we don't have accurate information on their numbers or how stable they are. As they have a widespread range (north Africa, Asia and Europe) they will not go extinct anytime soon, but regionally this may be different.

## Management Tips

*Food for the Humming-bird Hawk-moth:*

On the farm:

- Encourage Honeysuckle in native hedgerows and around the farm.

In the garden:

- Plant tubular nectar-rich flowers, such as Red valerian, Lavender, Buddleia and Petunia.

*Larvae food:*

- As this Hawk-moth is a suspected resident, encourage various species of native *Galium spp.* Hedge bedstraw and Lady's bedstraw.

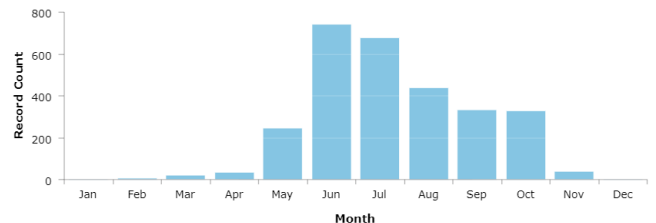


## When?

This migrant moth has been seen in Ireland as early as April right through until the November.

It is most commonly observed during June and July.

### Records per month across all datasets



National Biodiversity Data Centre, Ireland, Humming-bird Hawk-moth, image, accessed May 2023, <https://species.biodiversityireland.ie/profile.php?taxonId=78882>

## Where on the farm?

In hedgerows, woodland edges and in farm gardens and coastal sites, mainly feeding on tubular plants such as Honeysuckle and Red valerian.



## Value

- Provides valuable 'pollination service'.
- Cross pollination of our wildflowers, helping them stay resilient and boosting their fruiting ability for wildlife and the next generation.
- Health and wellbeing: There's nothing better than hearing a bumblebee buzzing or watching it move from flower to flower while feeding. So, it's fair to say, it give us that 'feel-good' factor.

## Further Info

A common day-flying moth that migrates to Ireland.

It is very swift on the wing and an expert hoverer and often mis-identified as a humming-bird. The wings beat so rapidly that they produce an audible hum and can be seen only as a haze.

The darting movement from one flower to the next with the long proboscis uncoiled completes the illusion of a hummingbird. They are reported to trap-line, that is, to return to the same flower beds at about the same time each day.

They are abundant and resident all around Mediterranean countries. Its migratory habits are well documented, with many thousands regularly migrating northward in Europe in the spring. There is also evidence of a return migration in the autumn.

Larvae mainly feed on Bedstraws, also found on Wild Madder.

## Similar species

Another day-flying moth, the Silver Y, is often confused with the humming-bird hawkmoth, but is smaller and darker.

## Affected by a change in climate?

There is also a possibility that rising temperatures mean a growing number are able to overwinter in Ireland, some suspect they may already be residents.

In suitable conditions, they will spend the colder months tucked away in thick vegetation, a tree hollow or even a garden shed.

## Need some help with identification?

Just drop us a line, we'll be happy to help:

[pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie](mailto:pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie)

## Useful Links

Moths Ireland species information:

[69010.gif](https://69010.gif) (550×660) ([mothsireland.com](http://mothsireland.com))

Irish Moths species information:

[Irish moths - Hummingbird Hawk-moth, \*Macroglossum stellatarum\*](#)

Pledge your farm garden for pollinators, find out more here: <https://pollinators.ie/gardens/>

## Record here

Your records will help us build a picture of farmland biodiversity in Ireland. If you're happy with your Humming-bird Hawk-moth identification, you can submit your record:

- On our website at the National Biodiversity Data Centre: <https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/biodiversity-on-your-farm>

or

- You could also download our free smartphone App for recording in the field

*Android App:*

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nbdc.mobile.biodiversity>

*iPhone App:*

<https://apps.apple.com/ie/app/biodiversity-data-capture/id906361120>

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An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
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