

Hummingbird Hawk-moth

Macroglossum stellatarum

Insects · A migrant · most likely Jul-Sep



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A stout, fast-flying day-active hawk-moth with grey-brown forewings, orange hindwings and a fanned black-and-white tail tuft. It hovers at flowers with its wings beating fast enough to produce an audible hum, probing with a long proboscis. Hummingbird hawk-moths reach Dumfries as migrants in variable numbers, most often in late summer, and cause a flurry of mistaken hummingbird reports every year.

BEHAVIOUR

It feeds on the wing, holding a precise hover at buddleia, valerian, phlox and honeysuckle and moving between flowers in quick darts. It has excellent colour vision and a good memory for productive flower patches, returning to the same plant at the same time of day. It cannot reliably survive a Scottish winter, so almost all individuals here have flown north from southern Europe.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Hawk-moths (Sphingidae)
WINGSPAN	4-5 cm
STATUS	Migrant; numbers vary greatly year to year

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