

*DAPHNIS NERII* L. (LEPIDOPTERA: SPHINGIDAE) IN MALTA

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"Pearl", Vjal il-Helsien, Zebbug, MALTA

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A specimen of the Oleander Hawk Moth (*Daphnis nerii* L.) was handed to the author on 24 July 1984. This large moth was taken from Żurrieq (southern Malta) where it had entered a house, presumably having been attracted to light. The hawk moth was in good condition when captured but due to mishandling it reached the author in a very battered state. However identification was readily made.

The distribution of *Daphnis nerii* includes Africa and the Middle East to eastern Asia. Elsewhere it occurs in countries bordering these regions as a migrant. The larval food plants are *Nerium oleander* and occasionally *Vinca*, *Gardenia*, *Jasminium* and *Ligustrum*. The species is multibrooded (PITTAWAY, 1983).

The Oleander Hawk Moth does not form part of the Maltese fauna. It has previously been recorded twice from Malta: from the then Central Hospital at Floriana in 1943 and from the Argotti Gardens also in Floriana in 1955 (VALLETTA, 1973).

The author is grateful to Mr. A. Valletta and to Dr. P. J. Schembri for their helpful comments.

REFERENCES

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- VALLETTA, A. (1973). *The Moths of the Maltese Islands*. (the author), Malta, 118pp.

received August 1985