

First record of the threatened hawkmoth *Temnora peckoveri* from Cousine Island, Seychelles

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Cousine Island is a small granitic island situated 4° 20' 41" S and 55° 38' 44" E. It is just over 1km long, 400m at its widest point and 27ha in area (Bourquin 1997). During the evening of the 25 April 2009, a *Temnora peckoveri* (Butler, 1876) hawkmoth (Lepidoptera: Sphingidae) (Fig. 1; Fig. 2) was attracted to lights on the northern coastal plateau of Cousine Island. The species was identified using keys from both Matyot (2005) and Pinhey (1962). Further confirmation of the species identification was made by I. Kitching. The wingspan of the specimen is 52 mm. The forewing uppersides are similar to *T. fumosa fumosa* (Walker 1856) but the ground colour is a darker brown resulting in the antemedian and postmedian bands being less conspicuous. Hindwing undersides are a grey ground colour with the median band being inconspicuous, and with a strong black spot between CuA1 and CuA2.

Although *peckoveri* was considered a subspecies of *Temnora fumosa* (Walker, 1856), it was elevated to species status by Turlin (1996). It was subsequently listed as one of the 52 *Temnora* species by Kitching & Cadiou (2000). Legrand (1965) gives its distribution (*Temnora fumosa peckoveri* in his paper) as Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros. However, *T. peckoveri* is restricted to Madagascar and Seychelles only (Turlin 1996), with *Temnora fumosa chanudeti* Turlin, 1996 and *T. leighi* Rothschild & Jordan, 1915 occurring on the Comoros Islands (Kitching, pers. comm.).

Within Seychelles, this species has been recorded from the granitic islands of Mahe (1892, 1909, 1960, 1998-9) (Joannis 1894; Fryer 1912; Gerlach & Matyot 2006), Silhouette (1908, 1999) (Fryer 1912; Gerlach & Matyot 2006) and Denis Island (2003) (Matyot 2005; Gerlach & Matyot 2006). Known larval foodplant in Seychelles is *Morinda citrifolia* L. (Rubiaceae) (Matyot 2005). *T. peckoveri* is listed as Endangered/Vulnerable (B1abiii, 2abiii) in Seychelles (Gerlach & Matyot 2006). This threat assessment is based on the small number of specimens collected, and on it only being recorded from very few Seychelles islands. However, as *M. citrifolia* is widely distributed in Seychelles (Robertson 1989) it is very likely that *T. peckoveri* will occur on other Seychelles islands, and may just have been overlooked.

This brings the total number of hawkmoth species recorded from Cousine Island to three. The other two species being *Herse convolvuli* (L., 1758) and *Acherontia atropos* (L., 1758) (Lawrence 2005). Interestingly, the larval foodplant, *M. citrifolia*, is relatively abundant on Cousine Island, so breeding of *T. peckoveri* on Cousine Island is possible, although not yet confirmed.



Fig 1. *Temnora peckoveri* (upperside) hawkmoth collected from Cousine Island, Seychelles, 25 April 2009, J. Lawrence

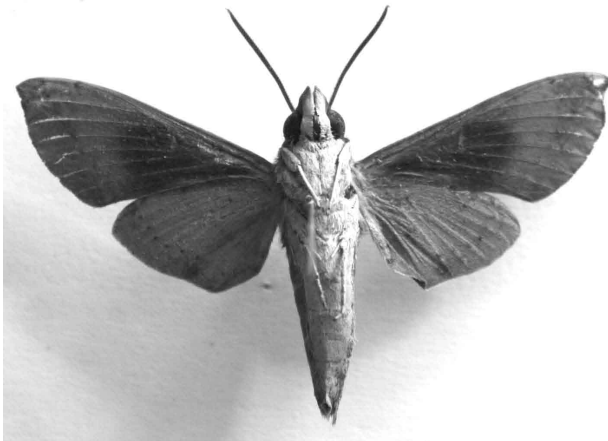


Fig 2. *Temnora peckoveri* (underside) hawkmoth collected from Cousine Island, Seychelles, 25 April 2009, J. Lawrence

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