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NEW FAUNISTIC RECORDS OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES *PROSERPINUS PROSERPINA* (LEPIDOPTERA: SPHINGIDAE) FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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The Hawk-moths (Lepidoptera: Sphingidae) are among the largest and most easily recognized Lepidoptera. Hawk-moths are medium-sized to large moths with strong and robust bodies and relatively short wings. Most species are nocturnal, but some genera (e.g. *Hemaris*) are active during the day. In the fauna of the Republic of Moldova the family Sphingidae is represented by 20 species, about 53% of the European fauna. Four species from this family require protection and conservation: *Acherontia atropos*, *Dolbina elegans*, *Marumba quercus* and *Proserpinus proserpina*. The species *Proserpinus proserpina* are mentioned in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (2015) with critically endangered statut (CR). The species is also included in the Bern Convention (Annex II), IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals in Category VU and Nature 2000. *Proserpinus proserpina*, are cited in the Red Book of Ukraine with CR statut, and the Red List of Romania with VU statut.

The species are mentioned for the first time in the fauna of the Republic of Moldova in 1929 by Miller E., Zubovschi N. and Ruscinschi A. in the "*Bulletin of the National Museum of Natural History*", being so far the only reporting on the territory of the country. The authors mentioned that found a larvae of this species near the village of Bularda (Călărași district).

Following research conducted in 2012-2021, the species has been reported only in Horăști village (Ialoveni district), on 02.05.22, leg. Galina Bușmachiu.



Fig. The species *Proserpinus proserpina*, Horăști (Ialoveni district), 02.05.22
(Photo: Galina Bușmachiu)

The species develops one generation. Adults take flight in May-June. Butterflies are active at dusk and night, feed on the nectar of flowers attracted by their strong smell, such as *Jasminus* and *Echium.* Larve develop from July to August-September. The caterpillars generally feed on *Epilobium*, but rarely on the eponymous *Oenothera*. Hibernates in pupal stage in the soil. *Proserpinus proserpina* inhabits moist, warm habitats such as wetlands, gravel pits, meadow ditches, stream banks and clearcuts. The limitation factors are the distruction of natural habitats (drainage and intensification).

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