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First Record of the Hawkmoth *Aellopos* *clavipes* (Sphingidae) in Tobago, West Indies

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On 17 February, 2009 at around 1730 h, I was at Englishman's Bay, Tobago, in Trinidad and Tobago. I observed a very unusual moth feeding on duranta flowers. *Duranta* is a cultivated bush or shrub (*Duranta* spp.), producing blue or white flowers and yellow/orange berries. The moth remained in the area for about five minutes and photographs were taken (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). I have seen a similar type of moth, a type of "hawkmoth" in the north-eastern United States, which are locally called "Hummingbird Moths", since their feeding behaviour looks similar to a hummingbird from a distance.

Photographs were sent to Dr. Matthew J.W. Cock for identification who stated that "based on D'Abrera (1986) and the characters which he gives, I conclude that it is *Aellopos clavipes clavipes* (Rothschild and Jordan)". Cock further noted that "five species are recorded from Trinidad – one with yellow markings and four with white markings, like yours. The one with yellow markings is quite common, but the four with white markings are not seen very often, and then usually in forest situations. These four are not easy to distinguish, even with pinned specimens. None of these *Aellopos* hawkmoths have been recorded from Tobago, but any of them might be found – the Lepidoptera of Tobago, especially moths, have been poorly collected, so there are many new discoveries to be made."

Other species of *Aellopos* have been reared (Moss 1920; Haber and Frankie 1983; Janzen 1985; Young 1985), all on species of Rubiaceae. The life history of *A. clavipes* does not seem to have been recorded, but Janzen and Hallwachs (2011) have reared it on *Randia aculeata*, *R. monantha*, and two other species of Rubiaceae. *Randia aculeata* has been recorded on both Trinidad and Tobago by Williams and Cheesman (1928).

Ever since my initial sighting, I have waited and watched for this moth to return, but so far, I have never seen it again. It must have strayed from the forest, which is very close, for this irregular meal.

I owe most of the information from the literature to Matthew Cock, who I thank for his assistance in putting this article together.

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Fig. 1 Hawkmoth, *Aellopos clavipes*.



Fig. 2 Hawkmoth, *Aellopos clavipes*.