



Local wildlife

During December I saw foxes quite regularly on Sutton Road around 7.00a.m. Sometimes, they were in gardens, other times they would cross the road in front of me and on a couple of occasions one would just stroll towards Preston in front of me. On the January walk; Colin Marsh reported seeing a large dog fox towards Rimbrow Hill. With the new food bins having a lock, it is rare to see one over-turned so I wonder how well they are feeding. Colin feels that the rabbit population is well down.

Grey Squirrel seems to be on the increase. I record them all over the village as well as through the estates in Preston. Despite the best endeavours of people to keep this pest away from bird feeders, they seem to defeat many defences. BTO are reporting that the presence of grey squirrel may deter small garden birds from using feeders. I even caught one hanging off the guttering outside my bedroom window in the autumn. There is talk about organising a cull. How this would work, I cannot envisage but some landowners having taken on the challenge.

Colin and Rita have organised small mammal trapping in the waterworks meadows during 2014. Four species were recorded with wood mouse being the most commonly recorded species. Bank vole, house mouse and common shrew also present.

Roe deer are ever present and breeding in the area.

Wildlife Walk – February 2015

Date and venue to be announced on local posters.

GARDEN BIRD WATCH DECEMBER

Undoubtedly it was a Little Egret seen in the centre of the village, first on Silver Street then from Anthea's kitchen window before finally a spectacular take off flying between East and West Brookmead and seen from my study window just after Christmas. In the past, reports of this bird have mainly been from the pond off Puddledock Lane. For many years, the Little Egret, was an unusual summer visitor to Dorset usually two to three sightings. In the early 1990s numbers at the larger open water sites began to increase with over 100 in Poole Harbour and with breeding first occurring at Brownsea Island in 1996. Today, we regularly see Little Egret on our monthly Frome Valley Bird count and it may be seen at both Lodmoor and Radipole quite easily.

Nobody reported the Jay in December, although they were around Rimbrow Coppice at the beginning of January. Blackbird numbers have increased and two people reported redwing. I noted a good flock of fieldfare and redwing at the Came Down Crossroads on 16th December and on one other day. There were three records of song thrush and one of mistle thrush. Maureen reported siskin from Puddledock Lane – a bird Jon Campbell and I were pleased to see at Morton Ford at the beginning of January. There were more records of grey wagtail than pied wagtail, which is pleasing. A few nocturnal observers reported tawny owl.



Little Egret © A Heathershaw



Honey Fungus on dead wood

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Review of 2014



Preston Beach January 2014



The Streamer moth 30 March 2014



Red Admiral on Red Valerian



Carlina Thistle on the chalk downs

With the southwest coast receiving a fairly constant battering from gale force winds and driving rain, I felt that we should begin the review with a reminder of the legacy of the closed beach road in picture 1.

During 2014, a small group of us continued moth trapping, mainly in our gardens and occasionally at the waterworks. I submitted to the County moth recorders just over 420 records mainly from myself, Sue and Jon Campbell and Rita Oxtoby. At the end of July, Sue and Jon had a visitor who brought a different type of trap (a 30w twin Robinson Actinic). This really showed the way with over fifty species on Old Bincombe Lane. The Streamer (picture 2) we have had once before in 2011 but looking through the list, I can see nothing new. Cream-spot tiger in May from Puddledock Lane, was a nice record of a grassland moth. Jersey Tigers flew from 12th July to 30th August, which was a good flight period as August was not good weather. Two other scarce moths worth mentioning are maiden's blush in my actinic trap and scarce footman from the waterworks.

Butterfly recording also continued apace through the summer using the new APP available on iPhones and Android phones. Small heath has recovered a little from two poor seasons on West Hill where in July we recorded over 100 marbled whites one July morning. There were regular sightings in the autumn of the migrant clouded yellow but nobody recollects seeing Lulworth Skipper, which did make an early appearance at Lulworth Cove.

In the later summer, based on data mainly collected by volunteers, a new red data book for England's plants was published by the Botanical Society of Great Britain & Ireland. This affects many of the chalk downland plants seen around the waterworks. Carlina thistle, rockrose, autumn lady's-tresses for example are now classed as **Near Threatened**, whilst Sainfoin a vetch found in small numbers by the top field gate is classed as **Vulnerable**. B.S.B.I. are now asking its volunteers for data to produce a new plant atlas in 2020.

2014	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total Records
Barn Owl	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
Blackbird	18	18	18	17	19	19	18	12	9	17	17	16	198
Blackcap	6	5	1	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	1	4	27
Black-headed Gull	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Blue Tit	15	16	17	16	14	13	13	11	10	13	15	13	166
Brambling	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bullfinch	2	2	2	3	3	2	4	1	2	0	1	3	25
Buzzard	6	6	4	6	6	6	12	4	6	6	6	5	73
Carrion Crow	9	11	8	11	13	9	10	9	10	14	12	11	127
Chaffinch	10	13	12	8	11	11	8	9	8	8	7	9	114
Chiffchaf	0	1	2	4	2	3	3	6	4	2	3	3	33
Coal Tit	2	1	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	3	14
Collared Dove	12	13	17	14	17	16	15	16	13	11	14	15	173
Common Pheasant	5	7	3	4	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	24
Cuckoo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dunnock	12	15	13	12	16	15	13	15	0	13	13	13	150
Fieldfare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Goldcrest	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	4	2	0	1	12
Goldfinch	11	11	11	8	11	10	9	6	12	8	9	9	115
Great Tit	12	15	18	16	17	11	13	15	5	13	11	12	158
Gr. Sp. Woodpecker	6	8	5	5	4	5	6	5	3	3	11	9	70
Green Woodpecker	3	9	7	9	5	8	8	6	2	6	7	6	76
Greenfinch	4	7	4	4	3	4	4	2	5	2	1	6	46
Grey Wagtail	1	2	0	1	1	2	4	1	1	4	5	8	30
Grey Heron	7	5	3	3	3	4	3	4	9	3	3	5	52
Herring Gull	12	11	10	9	12	13	12	11	0	10	8	9	117
House Martin	0	0	0	2	4	3	6	4	14	0	0	0	33
House Sparrow	15	15	15	14	20	19	16	17	9	19	16	14	189
Jackdaw	9	11	14	11	14	16	12	12	1	12	11	9	132
Kestrel	1	4	2	4	2	4	3	2	0	2	2	1	27
Linnet	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	8
Long-tailed Tit	11	10	6	5	4	7	5	7	12	6	5	8	86
Magpie	16	18	15	12	15	15	14	16	1	19	17	15	173
Mallard	1	1	4	5	8	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	23
Mistle Thrush	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Moorhen	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	0	11
Nuthatch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pied Wagtail	4	3	4	2	3	7	4	3	1	5	4	3	43
Redstart	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Redwing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Robin	13	17	19	14	19	17	16	17	15	20	17	16	200
Rook	9	10	13	11	14	15	11	10	9	11	12	10	135
Siskin	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	5
Song Thrush	2	2	2	1	2	3	4	2	1	0	1	3	23
Sparrowhawk	3	2	1	1	0	3	2	5	2	2	4	2	27
Starling	7	9	8	9	6	7	8	3	2	2	3	6	70
Stonechat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Swallow	0	0	0	5	9	8	6	7	1	0	0	0	36
Swift	0	0	0	0	2	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	11
Tawny Owl	0	6	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	2	3	4	31
Treecreeper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Willow Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	5
Wood Pigeon	18	19	17	17	18	16	16	16	16	17	17	16	203
Wren	6	7	8	4	7	6	10	8	8	10	9	7	90
Yellowhammer	3	4	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	0	4	27
Counts													3406
Total Species seen	35	39	41	41	39	38	45	39	37	36	36	38	52
Total Records	307	317	286	277	316	309	310	272	221	272	284	282	3453
Average per survey	15.4	17.8	15.9	11.5	15.8	16.3	17.2	14.3	13.8	13	14.9	16.6	
No of gardens in survey	19	19	18	18	20	19	18	19	16	21	19	17	18.6