



**March 2022 Garden Bird Watch will be 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

Writing this on 17<sup>th</sup> March, I awoke this morning to a heavy ground frost but now by lunchtime the sun is shining and butterflies are on the wing with three species seen this week viz. peacock, small tortoiseshell and small white. In a sheltered garden last Sunday a dark edge-bee fly *Bombylius major* was seen together with a red-tailed bumble-bee and a white-tailed bumblebee. Wheatears have been reported from the coast and Ruth spotted two redstarts (both summer migrants) during the week. However, caution Rita spotted six redwing, still here by Came Wood on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Garden Bird Watch:**

As a result of publicity: Lizzie from the Warren joined us for the first time and Maureen from the Cottage on Puddledock Lane re-joined as we sorted out her technology problem. Welcome!



There are very few birds I can hear now but chiffchaff (left) is one of them with robin, wren and great tit. Green woodpecker has to be quite close. We had a good turnout with reports from 17 gardens with top scorers being wood pigeon, magpie and blackbird. What is good, Steve on Old Bincombe saw a pair of redwings and song thrush. Ruth reported a flock of 40 starlings roosting overnight in the Waterworks pines. The grey wagtails seem to have disappeared and just one pied wagtail whose numbers here have dropped in the past year. House sparrow numbers seem down although we had 14 reports. It was also good to see three reports of bullfinch, which have shown a national decline due to the demise of orchards. Finches are also in decline only five reports of chaffinch and reflecting increased rarity Nationally two reports only of now red-listed greenfinch.

I know it is cold in the evenings, but please listen out for tawny owls as there are plenty of wood mice about. Colin reported our dormouse boxes were full of them.



## The Dorset Flora Group Mistletoe survey.

Following a firm request from Robin Walls – the BSBI flower recorder, I have submitted our records. There were more than I would have thought with records from the poplars at the end of Puddledock Lane being fairly new and could easily have been taken for birds' nests. Some have been around for years, such as these in a garden off Plaisters Lane, whilst others are small and quite young. My recollection is of losing mistletoe in three places including from a hawthorn in my garden when the branch came off in a pruning exercise. Other losses have been due to housing development, e.g. Wimslow Road. It is north and east Dorset, where much of the County's mistletoe is found.

## Lichens



As part of the review of the Village Biodiversity Report over the past ten days, Rita, Colin and John have been surveying lichens. **What is a lichen?**

- A lichen is not a single organism; it is a stable symbiotic association between a fungus and algae and/or cyanobacteria.
- Like all fungi, lichen fungi require carbon as a food source; this is provided by their symbiotic algae and/or cyanobacteria, that are photosynthetic.
- The lichen symbiosis is thought to be a mutualism, since both the fungi and the photosynthetic partners, called photobionts, benefit. (British Lichen Society).

Not easy, we are only beginners, but we have fairly confidently listed 127 mainly from around the Waterworks, but also some of you will have seen us looking at the walls at the end of Puddledock Lane (left picture) , a gate (right picture) in the Waterworks meadow and we have also visited Bill and Ruth's orchard.

### Next Month:

- We start the Butterfly Conservation transect walks from 1<sup>st</sup> April . If you can help, contact John and training will be given.
- It is likely around Easter that we will be doing a Bat roost count in mid -late April at the Waterworks office. We have bat meters and training will be given We start 20 minutes or so before sunset. Contact Colin on safecol(at)aol.com.