



Local wildlife

Dave Emery reporting on the monthly bird survey over Wessex Water land reported three Dartford warblers on the small gorse on West Hill. He also noted fifty skylark on the downland above the waterworks bowl during the first week in November. This is in line with BTO reports of skylark flocks moving into Britain citing 113 at Spurn Point NNR.

A number of people were reporting late butterflies with their bird report – mainly red admiral with my latest being 7th November.

I have also had comments about ladybirds hibernating in houses. I strongly suspect these will be the alien or migrant harlequin ladybirds, which are bigger than our native ladybirds and are present in the UK in a variety of subspecies as shown in the photograph. Mostly recorded in England since 1990, I have seen hundreds sunning themselves on a stone building in south Yorkshire. Here they are associated with limes and sycamore and certainly recently we were brushing them off our trousers in north Dorset.

They like to hibernate in buildings. If you find an over wintering ladybird, bring it to me and I will identify it.

Harlequin Ladybirds © John Newbould



Wildlife Indoor event – 12th December 2014
Assemble photographs for January coffee morning
from 9.00 – 11.00am at 3 Brookmead Close
 Bring any photos we can use for a display at January coffee morning

Garden Nature Watch

Richard Porter drew my attention to a pair of jays feeding in his garden in the middle of October, which was interesting because Dave Emery and I had heard one in the Waterworks Copse a week earlier. This was followed by an email from Jack Winspar saying that in the field behind his house 3 jays were playing tag with a sparrow hawk. Sue Campbell reported similar happenings on old Bincombe Lane. When the recording sheets came in, six people had reported jays in their garden with Richard telling me that they are still present on 9th November. As Jack has pointed out using BTO data (see below) jay sightings do increase in October whilst searching for acorns. Dave reported that the birds in the copse were present on 5th November. This is all quite interesting because our regular Frome Valley Bird watch which includes oak woodland did not see a single jay on 6th November, but we saw three jays at Hambledon Hill on 28th October where there is no oak.

Nearly all our recorders report wood pigeon, usually in small numbers in their gardens all year, but Dorset Bird Club were reporting many thousands travelling west over Portland and Hengistbury Head during the first week of November.

We had no reports of fieldfare or redwing from garden bird watch, but we have seen them at three or four locations in Dorset during early November. Keep your eyes open, especially if you have left apples on trees in your garden. Many people have commented how few birds are present in their garden. Again the numbers of small birds seen on our Frome Valley trips are well down this year. I have also seen a report from Norfolk making the same comment. Could it be down to the wild wet winter or are insect numbers down? The bigger birds seem to be doing well



Jay Photograph and graph © BTO



EDITOR: JOHN NEWBOULD

01305 837384

suttonpoyntz.org.uk/biodiversity

MAIL: johna72newbould@yahoo.co.uk