



December 2022 Next Garden Bird Watch 27th December to 2nd January

Congratulations to Dave and Jon for obtaining grants and trees to plant a new hedgerow of 1000 assorted native trees to go alongside the Millennium oaks with the hedgerow part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. A real community project involving people from the village, a few scouts who turned out in foul weather and the group Richard organises each week. We look forward to watching the hedgerow grow but if the summer of 2022 is anything to go by, we will need to consider how to water these saplings in.

Garden Bird Watch:



Interesting, I wonder if birds realised that a hard winter was about to come. There were no sightings of chiffchaff (Photo from Janet left and two sightings of blackcaps. Both these birds have normally migrated south in the winter but most years a few stay behind. Also interesting, no records of fieldfare or redwing, although on our travels to the National Trust in west Dorset, our team are recording both each week.

The dead seabirds due to Avian Flu seems to have stopped. Certainly at dusk, on one evening last week I saw over 500 herring gulls heading to the sea off Weymouth at dusk. Again, none are being reported in fields in West Dorset. The situation is certainly serious.

BTO have published a recent report on the decline of chaffinch (we had five records of small flocks) and greenfinch where we have one record of three birds. The virus infection seems to still be taking a hold. It is great that grey wagtail is holding on using the River Jordan.

We had reports from fourteen houses.

Small mammals

I was delighted to have a hare in my headlights between Whitcombe Farm and the Stables last week. A young Fox was in the woodland along Puddledock Lane on 11 December around 8.00am. Dave is reporting rabbits and a male roe deer from the waterworks woods.

Wildflowers:

I have pulled out thousands of petty spurge, which produced all the plants in November, which were not produced in the dry summer. Amongst the rare plants unusually in flower is Babbington's fumitory *Fumaria capreolata* subsp. *babingtonii* at the front of my house.

Dorset Flora group remind me that from 1st to 3rd January 2023, there will be the annual New Year's Day plants in flower survey. Last year, Rita, Colin and I managed 34 species. If this cold weather keeps up that will take some doing in 2023. The survey time should take no more than three hours. Records from 1km square only and no garden flowers. Grasses and sedges count if in flower but no mosses! Recording forms from:

<https://bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt>

Please send your garden bird lists as soon as possible after 3rd January please.