



Garden Bird Watch 27th April to 3rd May 2025

Birds in the wider area

Ros checked on the snipe on 1st April and two flew up from exactly the same place as February. She wonders if they are nesting? I know exactly where they are, just a couple of fields away from the Springhead pub. Plenty of tawny owl activity going on.

Carole from Old Granary Close reported an exciting weekend of sightings in the garden with the first Swallows and a fly past of an Osprey, if this wasn't exciting enough a fly past of a White-tailed Eagle on Monday this week (8th April). We have been to Wareham and Poole Harbour several times and never seen one. I'm pleased that the Dorset Bird Club also reported the sighting, I knew the Eagle was big but nothing quite prepared us for just how big. The following day – a red kite. All these species have been encouraged by successful re-introduction programmes in the last 25 years (Ed note)

On 3rd April Penny observed a heron on the roof opposite, until it was chase doff by crows and gulls.

Friday 11th April John observed a yellowhammer fly across Plaisters Lane from Purbeck Lodge into Wyndings 8:45am. Later, he and his wife observed a pair fly north across the east end of Whitcombe Lane into a hedge. Also, residents of Old Bincombe Lane (not members of the Biodiversity Group) heard a cuckoo late morning.

Jon reported a few linnets from Combe Valley area, but no stonechats and white throat. Interestingly John did not see or hear a stonechat whilst doing the butterfly count round te waterworks.

Tuesday 15th, John observed a skylark flying south east over the Cart shed.

Bats

Mike at Mullions reported just a couple of Pipistrelles feeding over the garden early evening but not in the numbers of previous years so hope as the weeks go on numbers increase. We ran a Heterodyne bat meter, which collects data on a Sim card in John's garden a few days later for two nights as a test with rare common pipistrelle sand a single soprano pipistrelle.

Insects

There are a few bees about on warm sunny days. John saw a single large red damselfly in his garden on 13th April. I think this is the earliest I have seen a damselfly, usually during the last week in April.

Butterflies:



At the time of writing, we have completed two standard butterfly walks, despite the cold north-easterly winds. On both occasions, butterflies were seen in sheltered places with speckled wood being the most common, rare peacock (excuse the photograph on ivy), both male and female brimstone, female orange tips. Others seen since our last *Newsletter* include a single comma on Puddledock Lane and green-veined white. Butterflies have rarely been seen before 11:30 am due to early morning frosts.

Wild Flowers:

Blossom this year has been brilliant ranging from magnolias, pears, garden cherries and in the wider countryside both blackthorn *Prunus spinose* and greengage *Prunus domestica* subsp. *insita*. Unfortunately, one needs to look closely.



Greengage Leaves with flowers, which are larger than blackthorn with sparsely hairy twigs and petals off white and larger than blackthorn



Spines behind the flowers. More dense than greengage with petals 4-6mm. Side by side you will immediately see the difference.

Woodland flowers are blooming. Wood anemones, bluebells are beginning to flower, yellow dead-nettle, greater stitchwort, lesser celandine, dog's mercury and wood violet. Two species of wood violet. Pale wood violet flowers earlier than wood or dog violet *Viola riviniana* Which is in flower now. Look for the white spur with a notch and paler flowers.



Early purple orchid is beginning to flower in south facing places. Wild arum is also beginning to flower. Plenty of primroses – a real weed in my garden. Wood spurge may be seen in some woods.

Both ash and pedunculate oak are flowering, with the latter already in leaf

Garden Bird Watch

From our standard list you made 233 records of forty species from 14 gardens, averaging 17 per garden. Then there was the species on page one, some observed from gardens and some from the wider countryside. We miss Dorothy from Wyndings, who faithfully recorded yellowhammers, in the spring and autumn with my record the first from that area for three years. Key species doing OK are robins and blackbirds, which everybody notes. However, the two woodpeckers are not noted as frequently as in the past and house sparrow numbers have certainly crashed. One mistle thrush, which is rarely recorded and greenfinch hanging on in there along with chaffinch despite the dreaded virus.

Two species, which we saw/heard whilst out in north Dorset at Turnworth last week we are missing is nuthatch (which even I can hear) and treecreeper one of my favourite small birds.

Thank you all for your contributions. Please has anybody any frog spawn?