



**Wildlife Walk** – 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2015  
**Mission Hall at 9.00am followed by Coffee morning**  
 at 10.30am in the Mission Hall when we will have a display.  
 .Happy Christmas to our readers

**Local wildlife**

David Emery's conservation group spent an interesting November morning hauling this very big tawny owl nest box into a tree in the waterworks copse. The owls start breeding in March without making a nest producing one brood of up to three eggs, which are incubated for 30 days. The birds are fed for around 40 days before fledging.

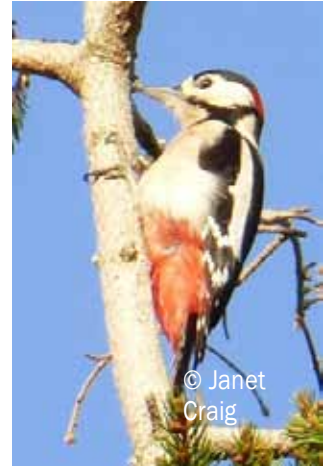
Defra in a recent report *Wild bird populations in the UK 1970-2013*, based on figures produced by voluntary organisations are saying that there has been a 50% decline in woodland tawny owl population demonstrated in the graph below from BTO. However, the usual method of collecting statistical information on birds does not work for tawny owl, which is most vocal during the night. Our own reports have increased if anything with a maximum of 36 in 2012. Graph © B.T.O.



Nest box constructed by Ray with thanks.

**Garden Nature Watch**

Caroline Crisp drew my attention to the mistletoe, which has now killed an apple tree in their garden. Mistletoe is a woody parasite, which is dioecious. The yellow leaves on the left of the photograph are the male plants, whilst the berries are the female plants. One method of controlling mistletoe and holly, which is also dioecious is to cut the berries for Christmas decorations. Jon Campbell also reported the natural destruction of a rowan by their front door on Old Bincombe Lane. This time the resident greater spotted woodpecker is responsible. So much for the tree preservation orders put on all the trees on Old Bincombe two years ago.



© Janet Craig



Jays were still present in three gardens in November. Bullfinch (another birds showing a 50% decline since 1970) was only seen at Wyndings. In the fast flowing water category, grey wagtail (reported in five gardens) has

declined by 50% since 1970.

Butterflies were still around until the end of November. We have found two small tortoiseshells in the house. On the last day of November, I recorded both 7 spot and harlequin ladybirds and I had two unidentified hoverflies round the camellia in the warm sun.



Tawny Owl  
 © Pat Bellis

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