



Clouded Yellow

© John Newbould

Local wildlife

Our 3rd October walk took us up the track to Wimslow Hill. The west side of the track has a normally wet ditch, but with one of the lowest September rainfalls for many years, there was little water. However the leaf-fall from the adjacent hedges encourages plants such as great-hairy willow-herb, which require a nutrient rich environment but in places there were a few plants of the rarer marsh ragwort. On the north facing quarry bank bird's-eye speedwell was covered in the gall *Jaapiella veronicae*. I really have never seen so many galled plants.

On reaching the main road, we turned south over the pasture towards Wimslow Road. It really is only at this angle that one can appreciate the size of the long barrow on its summit. On the electricity pylons a juvenile kestrel contemplated our approach without moving off. Nearby a skylark was sat on the wires accompanied by meadow pipets. There were plenty of goldfinches flocking over the hedges.

Returning to the village, we witnessed one of the largest clumps of mistletoe around at the house for sale.



7-spot Ladybird © John Newbould

Wildlife Walk – 7th November 2014
The Willows, Sutton Road
9.00am at the Phone Box followed by Mission Hall
 Coffee morning
 Watch for a poster to confirm. All welcome.

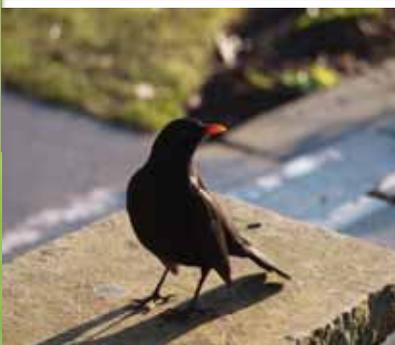
Garden Nature Watch

Dave Emery highlighted the absence of blackbirds in his September garden list. I had also wondered why we had seen so few when three turned up in my garden. I turned to the BTO website www.bto.org.uk where I learned that a long-term decline started in to mid 1990s followed by a small upturn, which then stalled. Fledgling numbers increased then declined. Blackbirds like to eat insects, earthworms and fruit in season preferring fallen fruit. I pulled out the figures for 2011-2014 and accepting that the figures are actual; not averaged for the number of gardens taking part: the number of gardens returning blackbirds start declining in August to a low point in September each year. Nobody in 2014 saw more than three birds although the BTO garden bird-watch scheme has members seeing six birds. The experts put the August- September dip down to birds moulting and keeping out of the way and transferring their feeding habits to fields and hedgerows.

We have had five records of a single Grey Wagtail. This is another bird showing a 58% decline since 1975. The decline of Grey Wagtail is considered due to a decline in the number of fledglings. For breeding they favour upland wooded streams with breeding timed to coincide with a higher number of insects present in streams shaded by woodland. They are seen occasionally in wooded areas along the River Frome in winter, especially where there are gravel banks. We probably have a pair resident in the village again. The reduction in house martin breeding colonies in the village would appear to support a national trend.

The availability of data sets going back to 2009 is becoming very useful in spotting early trends.

Upper graph is Sutton Poyntz data: lower graph is © BTO



EDITOR: JOHN NEWBOULD
 01305 837384

suttonpoyntz.org.uk/biodiversity
 MAIL: johna72newbould@yahoo.co.uk

