



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



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February 2019 Garden Bird Watch this month 24th February to 2nd March 2019

The number of garden bird watch returns this month is quite disappointing, with just thirteen sets of records. The group membership numbers have fallen to around 18 with one or two people effectively corresponding members but are kept in touch through *Biodiversity News*. Around Christmas time, I prepared an advertising piece and asked The Sutton Poyntz Society editor to circulate it but, although he has acknowledged receipt nothing has happened.

So, from our thirteen respondents, you have reported 37 species averaging 19 species per garden with a total of 268 records. Once again in winter, yellowhammer venture off the hill to the gardens around the bend on Plaisters Lane. Has the house sparrow population dropped with records from only ten people. Walking around I feel I do not see as many. Three people reported redwings but no fieldfare, which seems to be a consensus of our expeditions into the wider Dorset countryside. Only one person reported bullfinch, although Colin and I were lucky enough to see two males and two females in Tincton. No reports of grey wagtail although I had two pied wagtails in my garden. More blackcaps seem to be over-wintering with six people reporting them.

Jon tells me that on his Wessex Water survey, he had three distinct territories of song thrush singing on 29th January. Coilin has identified a territory on Puddledock Lane in an ash tree, whilst every morning this week at around 7.15am, a song thrush has called loud and clear from the scrub on the roadside opposite the redundant chapel. Ros has put up a couple of snipes under White Horse Hill whilst Jon reported a flock of 20 lapwings flying over Old Bincombe Lane at dusk last week. Back to the Wessex Water survey, Jon reported two linnets deep in the gorse. Have they over-wintered here or returned early?

On 14th February, Colin reported seeing a stoat in the hedgerow to the west of the Beacon. In years gone by, we would see dead frog's road killed on Sutton Road in mid-February. Nothing this year; although, elsewhere a colleague fished two palmate newts from a silted-up pond. John C found a toad on his doorstep earlier this week. Has anybody else seen in amphibians?

Lesser celandines are starting to flower along with opposite-leaved golden saxifrage in wet woodland areas.