



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



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June 2019 Garden Bird Watch this month 23rd -29th June

The unfavourable weather has resulted in mixed reports this month and limited the opportunities for observation, particularly those of moths and butterflies.

I have received 13 Garden Bird Watch responses representing a total of 42 species. These include some good sightings of Nuthatch and Goldfinch although the numbers of migrant Swallows and Swifts are down on previous years and the Grey Wagtail that can usually be spotted along the stream is notable by its absence at this time of year.

Jon in his monthly survey of the Wessex Water land, reports much increased Linnet activity across a more diverse number of sites and he observed a single Red Kite passing over West Hill on 27th May, while Dave E has heard the distinctive call of the rather secretive Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* in the fen above the Waterworks. Numbers of skylark on the hill seem to have increased in recent weeks after a slow start.

Jon and Sue along with Ros independently reported Bee Orchid within the Waterworks railings and I confirmed at least 6 spikes in early June. This chalkland plant varies greatly in numbers and location from year to year, although Richard Backwell will be pleased to point out that they are present in his garden most years.

[Photograph courtesy of Ros Evans]



We are fortunate to have European Eel *Anguilla anguilla* in the River Jordan and Jack spotted two in the stream opposite the Cartshed on polling day. A number of you may have seen the recent episode of Countryfile which highlighted the exploitation of this IUCN critically endangered species.

Butterfly sightings have been variable over the past month. On a positive note very good numbers of Small Heath (a BAP Priority species) and more recently Meadow Brown (Colin and Rita reported 350 feeding on Corky- Fruited Water-Dropwort along the Parish Boundary in mid-June) have been frequently observed along the public footpath below White Horse Hill. Less encouraging has been the very low numbers of Blues, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper and Lulworth Skipper and there have also been very few White species other than female Orange Tip. Colin reported his first Marbled White of the season on the 19th June.

On a more positive note I am encouraged by the Dorset Council's less aggressive approach to cutting of roadside verges this year (I am not prepared to speculate as to what has caused this) and this will benefit a number of pollinator species. Many of you will have

noticed the abundance of Horse Shoe Vetch, a key larval food plant for Adonis Blue *Polyommatus bellargus* on the grass banks at the top of Plaisters Lane and the wonderful display of Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) along the major trunk roads.

The weather has been poor for moth trapping and my Skinner trap has seen far less usage than normal in recent months, however, we have had some interesting moths despite the low numbers. These include Treble Lines, Light Emerald, Maidens Blush, Flame Carpet, Ingrailed Clay and the 'Red Data Book' species Portland Ribbon Wave which is rarely found beyond the east coast of Portland, particularly this early in the season.

Colin and Rita have been monitoring the Common Pipistrelle nursery roost at the Waterworks House as part of the Bat Conservation Trust annual monitoring scheme and early reports indicate emergent numbers comparable to last year of over one hundred.



One of the downsides to the new low maintenance verge policy is the explosion of the poisonous hemlock water dropwort along Sutton Road.



Conversely, yellow flag iris has beellowed to flower and set seed.

Late news: Dot E tells me that both yellowhammer and greater spotted woodpecker have fledged young and are bringing them to feeders.