



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



Editor: John Newbould 01305 837384 [Johna72newbould\[at\]yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Johna72newbould@yahoo.co.uk) May 2020 Garden
Bird Watch this month 24th – 30th May 2020

Considering how much is happening in the natural world, I am not getting out as much as I would like to although I am managing to moth trap on all nights where there is potential. Blame lockdown, social distancing or gardening, but I am certainly missing my forays in the Dorset Countryside.



Christine sent me this photograph suggesting a crab spider. I have to admit, I opening the image with trepidation as identifying spiders is not one of my specialities. I was relieved to find that I had seen the spider once before at Langton Herring, with my friend Laurence, who is not a spider expert, identifying it correctly as *Misumena vatia* typically found on flower heads amongst grass and woody margins. It is fairly common in southern England in a line from the Wash to the Seven estuary and occasionally on the Welsh Coast.

Moths:

Rita & Colin, Sue & Jon, Dave and John N have moth trapped most nights when the weather has not been too windy and often cold. Talking to other moth trappers in west Dorset, this appears to be quite a common problem, with Bridport being a bit of a hot spot with one friend recording 23 species in a session, when we could manage around five.

Highlights recently have included:



Iron prominent



cream spot-tiger

Iron prominent rarely sits in this pose, usually sitting with its wings folded close to its body in the way the books illustrate it. Other highlights included:



The rather local moth light brocade (illustrated left) recorded twice in my trap, tawny shears – a coastal moth which favours the flowers of red valerian in flower round the village; Chinese character treble lines with privet hawk-moth and occasional poplar hawk-moth. During the early part of the month, we saw the spring species changing to the early summer species with records of puss moth, white ermine and the very common heart and dart. We have had brown-line bright-eye as well as pale prominent.

Butterflies:

In contrast to the low numbers of moths, butterflies seem to have had a resurgence. Earlier in the month orange-tip butterflies were in profusion, but as I write this report that numbers are decreasing. However, Rita and Colin recorded around 100 small heath over by the Osmington boundary hedge and under White Horse Hill, also Adonis blue, together with a few early common blue and small copper.

Rita has also recorded both grizzled skipper (left) and dingy skipper (right) on the chalk grassland. Photographs courtesy of David from Fontmell Down



Dot reported: holly blue which we both keep seeing, also orange tips small and large whites, ringlet, speckled wood common blue. Jon noted a wall butterfly on West Hill at the end of April.

Small animals:

Both Dot and I have seen a single slowworm in our garden. Anthea reported a stoat from the Stables. One morning, I noted a very dark grey squirrel by the Puddledocks – it could be described as charcoal grey. Peter sent a video of badgers in his garden.

Bats in the waterworks wood – Colin

Further report for the period 4th to 11th May with the meter in the same location

Common pipistrelle activity was evident each night and closely followed the pattern of the previous period at this location with slightly elevated levels of activity.

No **Soprano Pipistrelle** were detected during the period.

Single brief transit of **Serotine** occurred on two nights.

Myotis nattereri (Natterers) were present on four nights with multiple passage on 3 nights. The earliest detection was 70 minutes after sunset and the latest detection 60 minutes before sunrise. These can be confirmed as very highly probable Natterers based on the analysis and previous records in the area.

No indication of the presence of **Daubenton's bat** in this location.

It can reasonably be suggested that the surrounding trees and ground vegetation is too dense and creates too greater confinement given the small body of water for this to be suitable habitat for Daubenton.

Birds:



Blackbirds

Pied Wagtail both from Janet Craig

Interesting month with Ros reporting cuckoo calling from the waterworks wood on 14th May, three people reported a grey wagtail in the waterworks channel at the eMd of Whitehorse Lane and Colin reporting six red kites over Chalbury Hill fort around 7th May.

Jon C did the Wessex Water survey during the last week in April reporting an increase in blackcaps and chiffchaffs in the water meadow. He also reported a reed warbler moving about the same area. There were good numbers of linnet along the Ridgeway sites. Lesser Whitethroat was in good voice adjacent to East Hill. There were also good numbers of stonechat and maximum of three yellowhammers.

Garden bird watch results are attached. Forty six species recorded in thirteen gardens. The grey wagtail was reported but refers to the birds mentioned above. Good to see four greenfinches reported but only seven chaffinch with both species infected with a virus. During the winter over many years good sized flocks of chaffinch have been seen near the farm on the Whitcombe Road but not in 2020. Blackbirds seem to have done well nesting in many gardens but only one record of song thrush. Jon C also added nuthatch to his inventory as well as Dave. A treecreeper was reported from the Puddledocks another rarity here. Six people reported swallows and house martins. House sparrows seem to be in good heart with numbers increasing all over the village and into Preston. Swifts have been seen occasionally since I reported them last month.

Ash dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*

I have been looking out of one of our bedroom windows at ash trees in neighbours' gardens, thinking these should be in leaf. This week I started to look more closely during my permitted leisure walks. The vast majority seem to have ash die back. For more really good information google ash die back and pick the Forestry Commission web site. There is a map of reported cases. The Preston area of Weymouth had confirmed cases in 2017. By 2020 it looks as though some ash in the next 10k hectad has also succumbed. But not all the left picture shows two trees

in a hedgerow side by side. The young one is still in good leaf. Trees adjacent to Sutton Farm appear to be in good shape – see the photograph below: Driving towards Osmington, a number of trees adjacent to the main road have succumbed as the ash along side the brook to the east of the stables. Driving along Chalky road from Broadmayne a number seem affected.



Various trees on Puddledock Lane



Good trees from Sutton Farm

Diseased trees by Osmington Brook.

Flowering Plants



One of the beauties of doing natural history over the years is watching species move in – change from losing one. This plant rosey garlic, I have long known from a patch on Chalky Road and on the corner of the Coast Road at Abbotsbury. Well it seems to have moved into a number of wild places in Sutton Poyntz with this fine example behind the Stables.