



## Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



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### October 2020 Garden Bird Watch this month 24<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> October Moths



With the improvement in the weather over the weekend, Rita and Colin, Sue and Jon and John have moth trapped with varying degrees of success, Sue and Jon had eight moths including black rustic. John had six moths including barred sallow (illustrated left) and large wainscot, whilst Colin and Rita just had feathered ranunculus, which we all had. This moth is said to favour calcareous soils, but is found all along the Cornish coast. It feeds on the flowers of ivy and over-ripe blackberries. It is especially recorded on the south-coast and a little inland and also around the Bristol Channel but goes north into Yorkshire and Cumbria.

Dave E and Dot up Plaisters Lane both had daytime Humming bird - hawk moths. Dave would be interested if anybody else had this daytime migrant moth during September or early October. Dot sent me some caterpillar photographs, which I could do including large elephant hawk-moth. Barbara had a Death's-head hawk-moth caterpillar in her garden.

**Butterflies** seem to be confined to Red Admiral, both large and green-veined white, speckled wood and on the hill small copper and one late common blue.

#### **Other animals:**

Roe deer and three slow-worms under corrugated sheeting.

#### **Wild flowers:**

Unusually I have noticed a small number of wild flowers flowering out of season. These included a primrose in my garden, yellow flag iris in the River Jordan on Sutton Road and a crab apple in fruit as well as flower on the Golden Cap Estate.



#### **Fungi:**

Honey fungus *Armillaria mellea* in my garden killed two pyrocantha and a magnolia this summer. These are the fruiting bodies. The killers are the fine threads, which grow inside the woody plant, gradually strangling the xylem stopping the flow of nutrients and water. There are four other related species.

Colin and Rita witnessed well over 150 field mushrooms below Rimbrow Copse last week.

#### **Birds in the wider countryside:**

Thank you to all who have kept me updated about the migration of swallows and house martins. On September 20<sup>th</sup> Ros reported lots of house martins in the bowl below Margaret's seat, which duly headed towards the coast on their journey to Africa and again on the 25<sup>th</sup> twelve at the top of the bowl. John and Caroline reported one swallow and six house martins in the same area on the 26<sup>th</sup>, whilst Jon witnessed a party passing over Old Bincombe on the 30<sup>th</sup>. These are in addition to those reported in gardens through garden bird watch.

There have been more reports of grey wagtail this month from gardens including one by the pond through Rita and Colin.

Wessex Water survey – Jon on 27<sup>th</sup> September saw over 200 house martins over the extraction point at the bottom of the hill whilst on the 3<sup>rd</sup> a well-marked ring ouzel either a female or juvenile, which pass through Portland regularly in Spring and autumn and are seen occasional within our recording area. He also recorded a few Canada geese; whose flocks seem quite diminished from those of ten years ago. He had good numbers of meadow pipet, a few stonechat, linnets in small numbers in the gorse.

Jon commented that this was the third ring ouzel in forty years of birding here so I must be lucky to have seen one in twenty years.

#### **Garden Bird Watch:**

Dave reported a spotted flycatcher in his garden – a first in 11 years of garden bird watch. As mentioned earlier we received four reports of grey wagtail including from Janet two in her garden. Dot reported three beautiful bullfinches about, a blackcap and a mistle thrush (rarely reported in garden bird watch). She also reported a kestrel. I wonder if it was the same Jon saw whilst on the Wessex Water survey. Five people reported tawny owl, which I can no longer hear. Interesting that there has been only one song thrush and six reports of blackbird, but these birds moult in August and September and keep low in the hedges.

Ros reported a sparrowhawk persistently attacking her garden birds. Very difficult to stop especially if you feed.