



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



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October 2021 Garden Bird Watch this month 24th – 30th October 2021

Fungal gall – new to Dorset

Recently, I noticed this rust on the remains of an old pear tree in Brookmead Close. I had seen it before at the National Trust's Beningborough Hall, north of York where it had infected a row of cordon pears. This only goes under its scientific name *Gymnosporangium sabiniae*. The photograph on the left shows the top side, whilst the right leaf is the underside. The fungus requires two hosts, so somewhere nearby a garden up to 6km away has a savin juniper *Juniperus sabiniae*. Colin and Rita had one infected leaf.



Again, my lawn, and the lawn by Myrtle Cottages and again the grassland under Chalbury Hillfort has many field mushrooms *Agaricus campestris*, which is common enough in lawns, meadows and pastures often forming rings.

They are saprophytic on dead or rotting vegetation and occasionally dung. Such fungi are an important part of the carbon cycle keeping our habitats clean and healthy.

The final picture is the box-tree moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*. It has turned up in light traps three times this year in Sutton Poyntz. The first time it was a melanic brown, so when this one was shown to me I struggled as it is not in the books. First reported in Kent in 2007 it is now well established in the London area and is spreading south-west certainly as far as Lyme Regis. The larvae are capable of defoliating a box tree completely.



Garden Bird Watch



The star bird this month for those of us who live around the junction of Sutton Road and Plaister's Lane has been a pair of **grey wagtails**. I have lost count of the times I have seen them, whilst Caroline described having one perch on the patio door handles. A red listed bird distinguished from its cousin the yellow wagtail by this bird having a deeper yellow colour but a grey head, whilst the yellow wagtail is more a lemon colour including the head. Our bird favours gravel bottom streams.

Image from the RSPB website.

What else, Jack reported a Jay, which is a bit scarce in Sutton Poyntz. Blackbirds are returning. There have been large numbers of early morning carrion crows with counts of over 20 from my bedroom window and again near the Springhead on the telephone wires. One morning there was 50+ over the Spice Ship around 7.00am. Not many finches were seen and there have been four reports of tawny owl, which is not surprising as you will find lower down the page. Very few song thrush. I am told redwing numbers are well down coming through north Yorkshire by a good friend who is an expert bird ringer.

Small mammals



We have been able to borrow a 12 Longworth traps (illustrated left). These were set in the Sutton Poyntz Waterworks land adjacent to two separate hedgerows on two nights. On the first night in the middle field, eight wood mice (illustrated right) were in traps and one bank vole. The second session recorded nine wood mice in the hedgerow adjacent to Veterans Wood – a 75% return -the highest ever in over ten years of this twice a year exercise. All the animals received corn and apple to provide moisture and were released at dawn.

Butterflies and moths:

At Wyndings Dot has hibernating in the outhouses one being a small tortoiseshell. On 28th it was a sunny day and around and on the daisies and late buddleia were a brimstone two peacocks, one red admiral, two large whites 1 small tortoiseshell three small coppers. She also still had a slow worm basking under the corrugated iron lots of mining bees around (the brown ones at this time of year).

Rita and Colin and Sue and Jon have continued moth trapping. Moths included black rustic, turnip, feathered ranunculus and black rustic

Finally – Janet has bee around the County looking for birds.



The jay (left) was from the Portland navel cemetery whilst the spoonbills (right) were from R.S.P.B. Arne.