



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



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March 2021 Garden Bird Watch this month 21st – 28th March 2021

Garden Bird Watch February:



Starling

© Janet



House Sparrows

We have had results from 17 gardens this month, which is everybody who we circulate. Thank you. WE have seen a total of 37 species and provided 267 records. There seems to be plenty of starlings seen but unfortunately only four people reported song thrush. Most people have house sparrow (14), which seems to do well if there is a dense hedge. With lockdown I seem to walk further round Preston and hear house sparrow in a number of places, but the large flock on Sutton Road north of Verlands Road has reduced considerably as the bramble bank has been slashed. Across Preston Road, the houses looking towards the caravan sites have feeders and there are good numbers there as well as the by the snicket on Preston Road through to Telford Close.

Both greater spotted woodpecker and green woodpecker have ben heard regularly along Puddledock Lane. Only one report of grey wagtail from Old Bincombe Lane. I definitely had a moorhen feeding on my lawn just after 7.00am. Really good to see eight people recorded blackcap but only one chiffchaff. I know my hearing is now quite poor, but ten years ago chiffchaff was every where but numbers seem to have dropped.

In the wider countryside Jon C reported two song thrush on the Wessex Water survey in full song, linnet returning to the gorse above the water works, yellowhammer but no skylark yet. Colin and Rita reported skylark below Rymbrow Copse. We have had them on the National Trust coastal properties for the last four weeks. He also reported a Dartford warbler for the

first time for years. Rita and Colin were pretty certain they saw and heard a marsh/willow tit by Sutton Farm. The latter needs an expert to detect the difference in song. Caroline reported a barn owl alongside the River Frome at Lower Bockhampton in the week 4th March. Marsh Harrier at Lodmoor and many tufted ducks.

Butterflies:

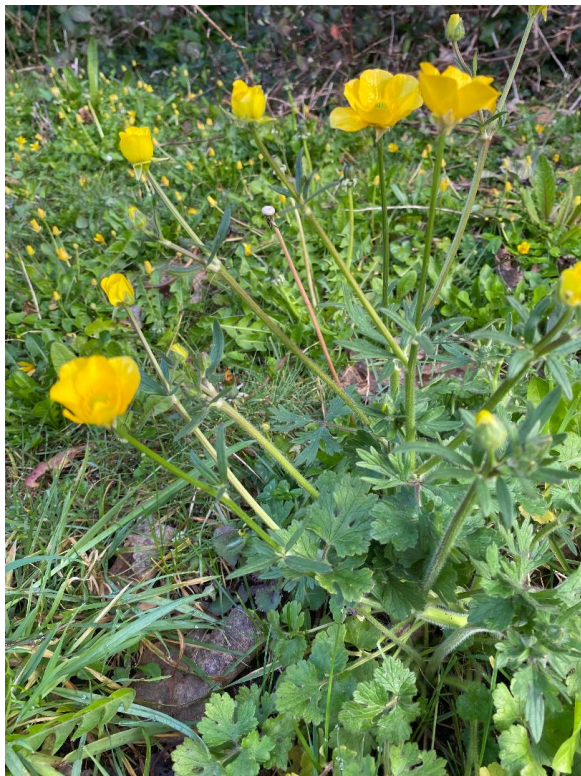
Dot reported peacock on the 18th and 28th February and a brimstone on the 28th. It has been too windy to moth trap.

Wildflowers:



You may have all noticed white blossom in hedgerows on Preston Road. Look carefully it is not blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. It has no spines and it is **cherry plum or *Prunus cerasifera***. This bush flowers until the end of March when blackthorn starts to flower. This has spines but no leaves. Later in April a similar bush has leaves and flowers Greengage or *Prunus domestica* sub.sp. *insita*.

Complex. They even have different plant galls.



Those of you who walk along Sutton Road towards the Spice Ship, may have noticed a buttercup in flower, by the little post box. Look carefully at the flowers and you will see that the sepals are reflex (or turned down towards the stem). This is one of the earliest flowering buttercups usually seen in old meadows and pastures flowering until the end of May. It is **bulbous buttercup or *Ranunculus bulbosus***. It generally is not as large as the one seen there. The next buttercup to flower is meadow buttercup *R. acris*. Again, reflexed sepals but much taller up to 30cm. Again, a buttercup of old pasture or meadows. The third common buttercup is creeping buttercup *R. repens*. This may be found everywhere including woodland grassland and waster ground. However, the big difference is that the sepals are appressed or runs under the petals.

Some years ago, I undertook a Defra standard hedgerow survey of Osmington and east Preston hedgerows. Dog's mercury was virtually absent so whilst on Lockdown walks, I was pleased to see a small area growing amongst ivy on Plaisters Lane. Similarly, I recorded very little hedgerow holly and once again a single young plant of holly is present in the eastern hedgerow just north of Mission Hall Lane.