



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity News



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May 2021 Garden Bird Watch this month 23rd – 29th May 2021



Butterfly Recording using a transect walk.

One of the scientific tasks, which we should have started years ago is the Butterfly Conservation Transect Pollard (after the inventor) walk. With the arrival of our new neighbour Penny who is an experienced recorder and a regular dog walker, I asked people to join a group, so that from April to the end of October, our turn comes up once every four weeks. So Rita and Colin, Sue and Jon, Penny and finally John (your editor) do this. The objective is to walk from Wyndings to the Beacon, then downhill to the Waterworks. Here we turn north and walk uphill to the end of the railings, before turning right across the path to East Hill then south back to the village. The objective is to count how many of each species, on five meters either side of the path in 1km square SY7084. So far, we have recorded 18 species, roughly 30% of the British list with more to come. Adonis blue when the weather turns and a strong possibility of grizzled skipper. Highlights so far include green hairstreak by Rita and Colin and brown Argus, which is not regularly seen here. Also good numbers of small copper and wall butterflies. Results are shown on the attached spreadsheet.

For those with a smart phone, on the Butterfly Conservation website is a new recording app for both Android and iPhones.

Birds in the wider countryside

I am delighted to say that after not reporting cuckoo for many years, Ros was walking near the Ridgeway when she heard one calling and then low and behold two were seen on the fence two weeks ago. She also reported that house martins are back in their nest under the eaves. So far David has not reported nightingales from Church Road using the blackthorn thickets, whilst a recent expedition to Ringstead Bay was not particularly successful.

There are very few skylarks around the waterworks, an occasional one over the hay fields to the east. Rita and Colin report that there are still around a dozen skylarks below Chalbury Hill fort. Jon considers estimating the linnet population amongst the gorse difficult. There are a few whitethroats. People usually see a pair of stonechats. He reported a single yellowhammer, a song thrush in the woodland and of course most of the village have watched the baby mallards on the pond.



Garden Bird Watch:

I received bird lists from fifteen gardens with two hundred and seventeen records, which is much lower than usual. We have had the late and I suspect smaller arrival of summer migrants, for example only two reports of small numbers of swifts. Dorothy confirmed Ros's record of cuckoo again two – excellent news. Green woodpecker seems scarcer than usual. We have had up to a dozen starlings digging into the lawn for leather jackets. I suspect both blackbird and house sparrow have bred in our hedge. Grey wagtail only from the Puddledocks. There were low counts of dunnock.

Moth trapping has hardly happened. Either cold nights with strong north easterly winds or rain or a combination of everything including as I write winds up to 60mph.

Wild flowers:

As May came in we watched the hedgerows change from bullace and blackthorn to hawthorn, field maple and dogwood. On the calcareous grassland slopes, horseshoe vetch is currently displaying well with bird's-foot trefoil (left below just coming into flower and primroses and cowslip s(right below) going over.



Yellow flag iris (top right) is showing well in the pond and the river.