



Biodiversity Group. Newsletter September 2022

Dot Emblem has had two peacocks already in hibernation in the outhouse. There have been regular roe deer visits every day and rabbits are increasing too. Butterflies: mainly brimstone, holly blue, large and small whites, one tortoiseshell, one small heath and a meadow brown but generally a very poor season. This low butterfly count is reflected in the standard Pollard walks we do for Butterfly Conservation, with low numbers of Adonis blues in August on the hill. The team doing the standard butterfly walks have so far completed 22 out of a possible 25 weeks since the start of April. We have done very little moth trapping due to cold winds at night from the north and or full moon with a cloudless sky. Dot has only seen one slow worm. Bats still come at dusk and sometimes the badger.

We needed to test some faulty equipment in John's garden where there was mainly common pipistrelle but not staying. Social calls saying no food here and flying away. Rita and Colin checked out the Waterworks roost with no activity. There are many grey squirrels around the village and Preston.



It is fair to say that most wild flowers were burnt out by mid-August with buddleia bushes providing some respite for pollinating butterflies and bees. Lavender in gardens was also very helpful.

Another helpful plant has been this salvia var "Hot Lips" with the image of a hairy-legged bumble-bee. However, many garden perennials have struggled. Many plants in our herbaceous border have been totally brown but starting to recover with the occasional late September rain. The geraniums by the phone box were watered daily using river water.

On a positive note, although bramble stopped flowering early, there has been a good crop of blackberries from late July, whilst apples and pears have done well. The other positive notes was the absence of groundsel and petty spurge from my beds, but these are coming back with vengeance after only a small amount of rain.

Janet has supported some sick and injured birds including a feral pigeon and this cormorant.



Avian Flu has taken a toll on guillemots, especially on the Lyme Bay side of Portland, but seen any at Bowleeze Cove and I have also had reports of dead herring gulls and carrion crows inland. Such dead birds should be handled with care using protective equipment.

Garden Bird Watch

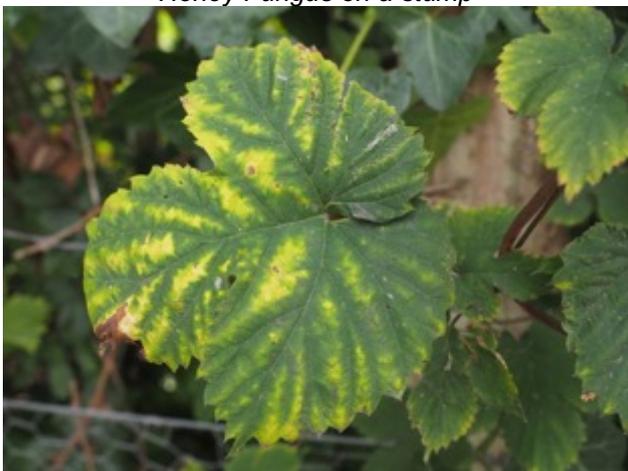
It has been a much poorer month, but then August always is with many birds moulting. Reports were received from 12 gardens with an average of 12 birds per garden. Probably the most outstanding spot was from David who had a Red Data spotted flycatcher in his garden all day mid-September. Two people reported house martins have moved on but only one report of a single swallow. Only eight people reported house sparrow. I usually see this bird on my early morning walks around Preston but very scarce in August and September. The only other bird not in the list I have seen flying in the village is a grey heron.



Honey Fungus on a stump



A good crop of damsons on Plaisters Lane hedge



For those of you who walk down Puddledock Lane and look at the hedgerows, there is some wild hops *Humulus lupulus*. Perhaps you have noticed the yellow patches. This is a downy mildew *Pseudoperonospora humuli*, which I have only seen once before on Studland.

GARDEN BIRD WATCH FROM SUNDAY 2nd October to Saturday 8th 2022.