



July 2022

Garden Bird Watch 24th to 30th July 2022

Conservation Task



David Emery tells us that the biodiversity group has just been awarded a grant of £1500 from the Dorset ANOB to plant 200m of hedgerow along the line of the millennium oaks together with a wide verge to act as a wildlife conduit from the down land. It will be a joint project with the farmer, the special needs facility out at Osprey and the village. Help will be needed in the autumn in planting 1000 trees as well as helping move the fence, with help from the farmer.

The headline picture is of harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*. These days the National Trust in West Dorset takes a lot of my time and I do not see this quite common plant much in the County (Eggardon Hillfort last year) . Turning for an explanation to the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's on line maps (Google BSBI Maps), I see that the plant is very well recorded over much of mainland Britain (it is rare on the coast in Northern Ireland, I see that the plant is rarely recorded west of Dorset and it is starting to fade out west of Portland. It is not climate change but probably a function of the geology and soils. Generally the path around the north and east side of the waterworks has been nicely grazed either by rabbits or cattle with much thyme, horseshoe vetch, fairy flax, yellow-wort, some rockrose on the eastern slopes and betony.



There are two other plants in flower now, which are not seen often and here in Sutton Poyntz, we are lucky in that both grow together below a garden wall in Mission Hall Lane (Church Cottage). Both are very small flowered for a tall plant. The blue one is vervain *Verbena officinalis*, which if you look at the map as downloaded seems common in the south-west. Focus the map to a higher resolution and there are a lot of gaps, with Portland being a strong hold. The white one is corn parsley *Sison segetum*, which is even rarer but found on the coastal strip between here and West Dorset and in Purbeck.

Other things of interest:



(Left) Jon Waterman photographed this slow-worm on Silver Street

(Right) The wild rose stems near Old Bincombe Lane and the Coach House have been eaten by this sawfly larvae *Arge ochropus*.

Garden Bird Watch

With holidays, the Street Fayre and illness, we have only had responses from twelve gardens. The next two months are usually the quietest for Garden Bird Watch as many birds migrate into the wider countryside for food, especially following the combine harvesters. Birds also shed their older feathers and cannot fly as well so tend to hide in bushes. Interestingly, in the heat wave, I have been sitting outside after our evening meal, when the noise of herring gulls can be quite overpowering with Colin reporting 400 on one evening over the Puddledocks and later in the week I saw a good 1-200 over Brookmead. They usually spend the night on the water in Weymouth Bay. Of note Dorothy reported a yellowhammer, there were six reports of song thrush, most reported house sparrow in different numbers with good numbers around Fox Cottage and Puddledock Lane. Robins seem to have had a good breeding year with a number of juveniles about. Swifts have mainly been seen and probably breeding around the Puddledocks but absent from over the Old Rectory at the south end of Sutton Road. Swallows and House Martins seem very scarce.

There have also been large numbers of Corvids feeding in gardens, especially rooks early in the morning on my lawn.

Butterflies:

Butterflies have generally been down in numbers on last year, although I had a good weekend at Hardy's Cottage on the 15th and 16th with 16 species. Here in Sutton Poyntz, we have continued to do the Butterfly conservation Transect walk from Wyndings around the Waterworks and back down East Hill. We have achieved 14 out of the 16 weeks so far with two weeks lost due to poor weather conditions. There were good numbers of Adonis blue during May, with good numbers of Lulworth skippers for two weeks only, green hairstreak once on the walk and one casual record, dingy skippers but no grizzled skippers, wall butterfly is now considered **Endangered** seen four times and once earlier this morning as a casual record. good numbers of marbled white, meadow browns (but these are down in the western hedge of the camping field and ringlets on two weeks only. An interim .pdf is attached.

We have not done much moth recording due to poor night time conditions with winds and the moon affecting light trapping.