



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group Newsletter June 2022

Next Garden Bird Watch 26th June - 2nd July

I am somewhat worried about the shortage of insects generally with the key species we monitor such as butterflies, moths and bees not present in any great numbers. The weather this month has been mixed with hot sunshine on the first two days of the Queen's Jubilee celebration, then whilst we picnicked in Erica and Tony's garden it turned cold then rained on us. As I write, we have had hot weather. We returned from Bath last Saturday to very strong winds, but very little of the promised rain then for three days really hot again, but still few butterflies and bees. No rain means martins struggle to make nests.

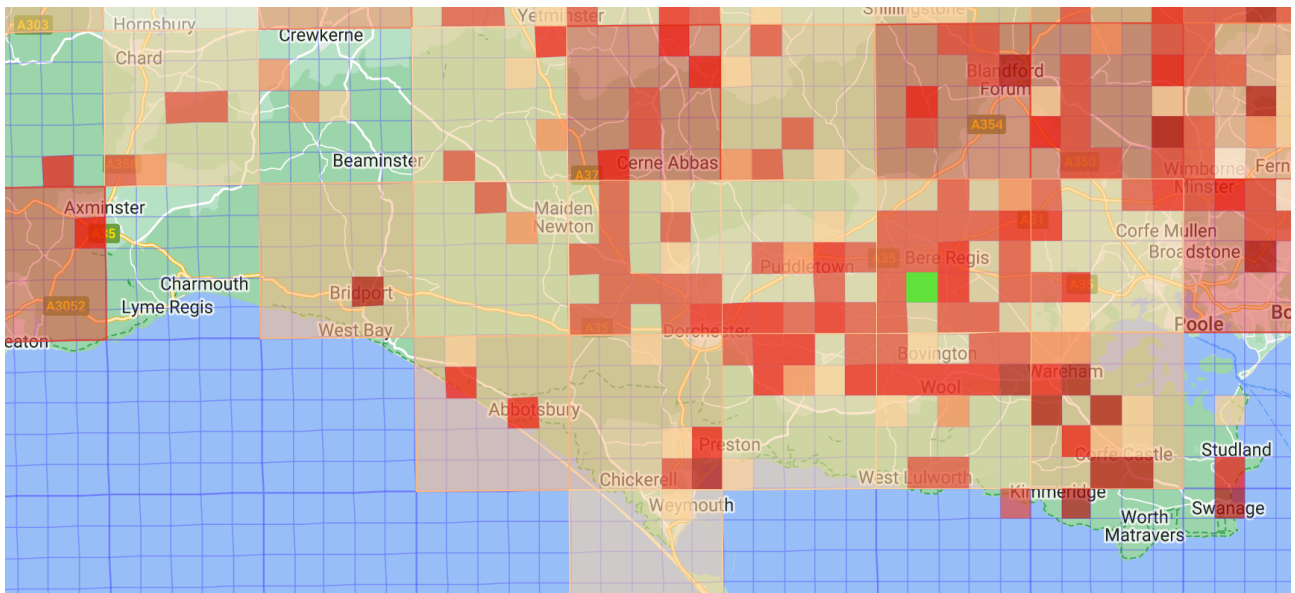


However, not total gloom and doom. Colin and Jon reported a small blue butterfly north of Sutton Farm. There are good numbers of Lulworth skippers around the Waterworks perimeter on the Butterfly Conservation transect walk, which we have so far managed to achieve most weeks since the end of April. Our moth traps have hardly been out this year, mainly due to strong winds or on possible suitable nights a bright moon with no cloud cover.

Wildflowers:



For a good number of years, this rose on the east side hedge of Church Road near Waterside, puzzled me. The usual thing, rose people tell me is that you sort them out in the autumn with their fruits. Sometime ago, when I was more active in the Dorset Flora Group, I showed a sample to the local experts, who declined to put a name on the plant. In early June, I found the plant in flower, used a magnifying glass on the bud, looked at the characteristics of the flower and prickles and came to the conclusion I could name it as small-leaved sweet briar *Rosa agrestis*.



The above map shows the distribution of blue water speedwell *Veronica analgalis-aquatica* -the banner photograph at the junction of Plaister's Lane and Sutton Road. Quite scarce in Dorset with the one green dot showing one record post 2020 on the BSBI Atlas. It is a plant of shallow margins of drainage ditches, pools and marshy meadows. A plant I rarely see so really pleased to identify it and photograph it. The other plant, which has caused me to not just wander past is horseshoe vetch in calcareous lawns, especially in Preston, whilst Littlemoor Road has plenty of kidney vetch, which coupled with the strong winds my explain our small blue record from Monday.

Finally, on plants: weeding between flag stones in my garden I found a liverwort.



On the face of it, not particularly exciting, but liverworts are quite tricky to identify, despite me having the literature. This one is a plant of wet places great scented liverwort *Conocephalum conicum*. This appears to be a female plant with terminal stalked conical receptacles with short descending lobes. The ordinal picture blown up to full size on the screen is stunning making identification easy. Liverworts are like plants in that they photosynthesise but do not have leaves. In my head, only sphagnum amongst the bryophytes are harder to sort out.

Garden Bird Watch

Not much to report this time. Most breeding birds seemed to have fledged with plenty young robins about. We had the pleasure of a song thrush singing away from a chimney opposite for a few evenings. I have seen a few swifts about especially around Puddledock Lane. Two people reported bullfinch both with gardens with fruit trees. Green woodpecker does not seem to be around much. Most people reported house sparrows in various numbers and seven people reported starlings both red data birds. House martins at three places