



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group Newsletter

November 2022 Next Garden Bird Watch 20th – 27th November 2022

Garden Bird Watch:



Over the years, we have reported the reduced numbers of birds due to the viral infection picked up when feeding, but as I write both the wild bird population and domestic outdoor birds are facing disaster with avian flu. The bird population is facing its own "COVID" type pandemic but only domestic birds can be locked up and should be locked up legally by now. I hear reports of many dead gannets in west Dorset, coupled with herring gulls and even small birds lying dead in fields. I recently witnessed a herring gull in obvious distress in the Pavilion car park.

The bird watching and documenting bird observations is very well organised in the UK with most observers using the Bird-track software managed by the brilliant scientists at the British Trust for Ornithology. The BTO currently have an appeal to fund research into AVIAN FLU: the areas affected, the types of birds especially sea birds and whether the disease has peaked or otherwise. We really do not know if the flocks of fieldfares and redwings, the whooper and Bewick's swans which migrate to the UK in winter are affected and even bringing the disease here. (see BTO.org)

I was quite disappointed to only receive twelve bird returns, this month many showing reduced numbers of species but welcoming the three reports of fieldfares, which may be warning of a harsh winter in more northern Britain. Normally every garden reports house sparrow but only ten this month and with the exception of Wyndings small numbers. There were only four reports of chaffinch and where I would expect to see small flocks of twenty to thirty birds in hedgerows on country lanes there only seems to be a few. There are small flocks of meadow pipits by Came Woods and Colin reports small numbers of skylark near Chalbury Hill fort. Things have not been helped by strong winds with squalls making us soaked through on field trips.

PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO SEND A BIRD RETURN DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN DECEMBER.

Butterflies: on warm days a few are about with peacocks, red admiral and brimstone seen locally.